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# The Deeds of Beowulf

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AN ENGLISH EPIC OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

DONE INTO MODERN PROSE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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Oxford

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## PREFACE

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THIS translation was originally made from the Fourth Edition of Moritz Heyne's text. His Fifth Edition came out in 1888, and I think I have used it enough to become acquainted with all the changes that Dr. Adolf Socin, the new editor, has introduced. Where they have appeared to me to be improvements, I have modified my translation accordingly.

My theory of the origin of the poem, which is given in the Third Part of the Introduction, though not absolutely new, because not now published for the first time, is so considerably expanded as to present a new aspect. It was quite new seven years ago when it appeared in *THE TIMES*<sup>1</sup>. The expansion of my theory has been so spontaneous in its growth as to be in itself, to my mind, additional evidence confirmatory; because as the new proofs have fallen in my way almost unsought by me, so they have seemed to come in simply through the natural affinity of all things for harmonizing with the truth.

I cannot put this book out of hand without once more acknowledging my debt to Mr. H. N. Harvey, who, in the generous office of a friend, has transcribed my purblind pencil work.

<sup>1</sup> My letters on the *Beowulf* appeared in *THE TIMES* at the following dates: August 25, 1884, September 30 and October 29, 1885.



# INTRODUCTION.

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## I. DISCOVERY OF TEXT AND PROGRESS OF INTERPRETATION.

THE Volume of the Cottonian Library in the British Museum which is marked *Vitellius, A. XV.* is a short but rather bulky folio containing ten distinct manuscripts, wholly unconnected with one another both as regards date and contents. Ninth in order comes our poem, which occupies about a third part of the volume; and it is written in a hand-writing which seems to belong to the close of the tenth or the early part of the eleventh century. This book suffered considerably in the unfortunate fire which happened to the Cotton Library in 1731, and many of the scorched leaves have since chipped away, so that the text is often mutilated at the ends of the lines.

A committee was appointed by the House of Commons to view the Cotton Library after this disaster, and we learn from their Report (1732, folio) that '114 volumes are either lost, burnt, or entirely spoiled, and 98 others damaged so as to be defective; so that the said library at present consists of 746 entire volumes and 98 defective ones.' The collection when purchased



had contained 958 volumes. Of late years great pains have been taken for the preservation of the fragments by careful mounting.

The existence of this poem was unknown to the learned world until the year 1705, when it was for the first time noticed in Wanley's Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts. It is a good illustration of the wide difference between the poetry and the prose of our early period, that Wanley, who was able to give a very good account of a prose manuscript, was quite at a loss in examining the *Beowulf*. He was right, in calling it '*Poeseos Anglo-Saxonicae egregium exemplum*'—but he was very wide of the mark in supposing it to be a description of wars between Denmark and Sweden. It is the more to be deplored that his discovery should have been so imperfect, and his description so uninviting, as the Manuscript was at that time still entire, and so continued to be for twenty-six years after the appearance of Wanley's Catalogue. During this period a complete copy might have been taken, had Wanley's notice afforded any hint of the importance of the poem<sup>1</sup>.

After Wanley, the first mention of the *Beowulf* in literature was by Sharon Turner, who in 1807, in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, gave some extracts from it, with such a translation as he was able to offer.

Towards the end of the century there was a strong movement among scholars in Denmark (prominent

<sup>1</sup> He begins his description thus:—'*ix. fol. 130. Tractatus nobilissimus poeticè scriptus,*' and then he proceeds to give two specimens of the text, one from the Prologue, which he calls the Preface, and a second from the first Canto, which he calls the first Chapter, and then concludes thus:—'*In hoc libro, qui Poeseos Anglo-Saxonicae egregium est exemplum, descripta videntur bella quæ Beowulfus quidam Danus ex regia Scyldengorum stirpe ortus, gessit contra Sueciæ regulos.*'

names were Suhm the historian, and Langebek the editor of *Rerum Danicarum Scriptores*) for the preservation of their own and kindred antiquities. In consequence of this movement, Thorkelin came to England in the year 1786, and obtained two copies of the poem. One of these he made with his own hand, and one was made by a professional scribe, who, being quite ignorant of the language, operated by way of facsimile<sup>1</sup>. During the following years this Danish scholar devoted much time to the study of the poem, as he was preparing it for the Press;—and by the year 1807 he had it nearly in order for publication. But in that year the old city of Copenhagen was stormed by the English fleet, and Thorkelin's house was burnt, and his literary property was destroyed, including his edition of the *Beowulf*. Fortunately, however, the transcripts which he had brought from England were saved.

After this crushing discouragement Thorkelin would hardly have renewed the attempt, had he not been urged to it, and munificently aided too, by the Danish privy councillor, John Bülow, by whom he was induced, though now old, to make another effort<sup>2</sup>. At length in 1815, he brought out the *Editio Princeps* of the *Beowulf*, containing the first printed text, with a parallel Latin translation and indices. According to the theory which he had formed in the course of his labours, this poem was supposed to be a translation from a Danish original which had been written by an author contemporary

<sup>1</sup> These are now the transcripts *a* and *b*, which serve to eke out the testimony of the wasted Manuscript:—they are preserved in Copenhagen.

<sup>2</sup> Thorkelin's account of it is in these words:—'Periit isto excidio Scyldingidos mea versio cum toto apparatu suo; et periisset æternum unâ animus eam iterandi, nisi Heros illustrissimus JOANNES BULOWIUS, dynasta Sanderumgaardi, exhortatus fuisset me, consiliis et ære suo adjutum, opus iterum inchoare, ut publicam videret lucem.'



with his heroes and personally acquainted with them; and he thought this Anglo-Saxon translation might have been executed by or at the command of King Alfred. In 1835, Kemble put on record his opinion of Thorkelin's work, both as to the transcript and the translation, in terms which were needlessly harsh and severe;—it is enough for us now to say that in the present state of our knowledge, this first edition is chiefly valuable as a historical monument and a literary curiosity<sup>1</sup>.

The work of elucidating the new discovery fell next to the lot of Pastor Grundtvig (such was the title by which he was best known in later years). As soon as the poem was published, he addressed himself to the study of it, and in the same year produced a series of critiques which appeared in a periodical called *The Copenhagen Sketch Book* (*Kjöbenhavns Skilderie*), and among the rest a poetical translation of the Prologue. Grundtvig's work divided the learned world of Copenhagen into two hostile camps. It is touching at this date, when time has quieted the agitation, to take a glance back at the extinct volcanoes of those passions which then blazed around the *Beowulf*. Thorkelin was furious against the young and daring pretender; and as for the shipping of Scyld's dead body off to sea as it appeared in Grundtvig's lines, he pronounced it all mere invention and a gratuitous fabrication of the translator's own.

But when Privy-Councillor Bülow, the *Mecænas* of

<sup>1</sup> Thorpe in the Preface to his edition (1855) taught us to congratulate ourselves on the ignorance of Thorkelin. He said:—'When Thorkelin, in the year 1786, made his transcript, the manuscript was evidently much less injured than when I collated it with his edition, there being many words in his text which were not to be found in the manuscript in 1830; and his ignorance of Anglo-Saxon is alone a sufficient guarantee that they were really found there, and not supplied by him.'

that time, saw Grundtvig's work, he thought otherwise. He at once made liberal proposals to the ardent young scholar, and induced him to devote himself to this poem, with a view to produce a complete poetical version of it in the Danish language. The generous action of this eminent personage played an important part in the early history of our poem. Now again, it was the munificence of Bülow that procured for this mysterious text its second exploration; and when Grundtvig's translation, or rather poetical paraphrase, appeared in 1820, his Preface contained a hearty acknowledgment from which I translate the following lines:—

I gratefully accepted an offer so generous and so flattering to my tastes: and here are the fruits of it. For I feel confident that my own bold resolution of translating this poem would never have been carried out, if I had not given a promise which I was bound in honour to fulfil. Without this promise, my task, even if completed, would never have been what it now is: I should probably have skipped over the obscurities by the aid of a brisk versification, while the easier parts would take their chance. But now I owed it to the Danish Nobleman, who opposed the prevailing clamour and honoured me with his sympathy, to justify his favourable opinion by every means in my power. So I set myself to the study of Anglo-Saxon as if I would qualify myself for Professor in that Language, and my task proceeded but slowly. Indeed, it was a work of time; I often grew weary, though without a thought of giving up—hold out I must, until I had exhausted all the sources of instruction to which I had access.

When we consider how comparatively easy it is to master this poem now, the language which has just been recited may appear extravagant. But it should be remembered that the facilities which now exist for the student, have been almost all provided since the date of which we are speaking, and are due in no small degree to the labours and suggestions of this undaunted scholar. Already before his time there were several Anglo-Saxon



books in print ; but, with one single exception, they were too far removed from the Beowulf in diction and nature of composition, to be of any great assistance to a translator of that poem. The exception of which I speak was Junius's edition of the poems which he attributed to Cædmon, and this book contained only a bare text, without illustration or apparatus of any kind. The poetical stores at Exeter and at Vercelli were as yet unpublished, and Grundtvig's Anglo-Saxon library was (to our present apprehension) ludicrously inadequate. Yet with constant study of such limited and imperfect sources, he accomplished wonders. By means of the faulty Beowulf-text of Thorkelin, aided by the generally trustworthy text of Junius's Cædmon, he made himself so effectively master of the old poetic language, as to correct Thorkelin in a large number of places ; and his emendations were often in the very words and forms of the manuscript which he had never seen.

It had been the passion of Grundtvig's youth to explore the old Scandinavian myths and traditions, and he would in after years vaunt himself playfully to be a priest and prophet of Odin. The text of the Beowulf found in him no unmeet interpreter, though at the time of his first approach he was ignorant of the dialect in which it was written. While he was mending this defect as best he might, he still continued to wade through the darkness of the poem till he had almost learnt it by heart, and it was to his patient eye that many of the *dramatis personæ* first became visible. He was the first to discern the marine sepulture of Scyld, to make out Sigemund the Wælsing, the sorrows of King Hrethel, the heroic warriors Hnæf and Hengist, and other characters which were missing in Thorkelin's

translation ; and—perhaps the most triumphant discovery of all—it was he who identified Hygelac with Chochilaicus in Gregory of Tours.

We cannot wonder, that when at the end of five studious years he offered the Danish Beowulf to his countrymen, his language should have been somewhat impassioned. The first version of the Beowulf into any modern language appeared in 1820. It was entitled—*Bjowulfs Drape*, 'The Death of Beowulf,' and it is rather a spirited and romantic paraphrase, than a translation in the strict sense of the term<sup>1</sup>. It may have been due to its paraphrastic and sub-humorous character that it became little known beyond its native land ;—the only mention I have found of it is by Kemble, who has on two different occasions joined the praises of Grundtvig with an adverse sentence upon Thorkelin's work.

In this volume Grundtvig gave several pages of emendations upon the printed text of Thorkelin, he having never (at that time) seen the manuscript. They were almost all true corrections, and many of them were actually identical with the manuscript readings. This was spoken of at the time and for a long time after as something wonderful and almost magical. How could any man say what would be the true reading in a text so primitive, barbarous, and shapeless ? The fact however that it had been really done was patent enough to all whom it might interest ; and when in later years Grundtvig visited England and was hospitably welcomed

<sup>1</sup> The full title is—'Bjowulfs Drape. Et Gothisk Helte-Digt af Angel-Saxisk paa Danske Riim ved Nic. Fred. Sev. Grundtvig, Praest. Kjöbenhavn, 1820.' Beowulf's Death. A Gothic Hero-Poem from Anglo-Saxon, in Danish Rime, by N. F. S. Grundtvig, Priest. Copenhagen, 1820.



at Oxford, his emendations were talked of, and with the effect of making scholars, who had been nurtured upon foreign classics, begin to wonder whether there might not be more in the treasury of their own mother tongue than they had hitherto apprehended.

The work of these Danish scholars constitutes the first stage in the interpretation of our poem. We will now return to England, and see the progress of the discovery there. The first Englishman who noticed the *Beowulf* (after Wanley) was Sharon Turner, the historian. He had indeed called attention to it as early as 1807, when it was still only in manuscript, but his notions about it at that time were of the vaguest possible kind. His mention of it at this early date is little more than a triumphant assertion of its importance, as establishing, against Ritson and other literary antagonists, the existence of poetical Romance before the Norman period. He pronounces *Beowulf* to be a work of this character, and reports of it in the following manner: 'It is the most interesting relic of Anglo-Saxon poetry which time has suffered us to receive. The subject is the expedition of *Beowulf* to wreak the *fæhðe* or deadly feud, on *Hrothgar*, for a homicide which he had committed. It abounds with speeches, which *Beowulf* and *Hrothgar* and their partisans make to each other, with much occasional description and sentiment.' Now, proper names excepted, this description has no more to do with the *Beowulf*, than it has with the *Iliad*, or the *Chanson de Roland*. Sharon Turner seems hardly to have apprehended that it could be a difficult matter for him to get at the sense of an Anglo-Saxon manuscript, and consequently he dispatched it very lightly. In his day, he was, probably, the best Anglo-Saxon scholar then

living, but, like Wanley before him, he was out of his element in the poetry. Turner had read many Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in prose, and this form of the language was familiar to him, but he was quite at sea when he tried the Poetical Literature, which had a vocabulary and a diction of its own, to which he was unaccustomed.

Probably Thorkelin had at first still less Anglo-Saxon knowledge than Turner, so he went to work modestly and laboriously, and the result was that Turner at length learnt from Thorkelin all that he ever knew of the characters of the poem. And therefore, although these two scholars are parallel in point of date, yet, in regard to this poem, Turner is a disciple of Thorkelin. Incorrect as Thorkelin was in a thousand places, yet his book did throw light on the subject, and that in England as much as anywhere. The Poem of Beowulf is quite another thing in Turner's History of 1823 from what it is in his earlier work of 1807. The poem was now characterized as a 'poetical Romance' or a 'metrical Romance,' and it was supposed to celebrate the heroic deeds of a Beowulf who fell in Jutland in the year 340. This Turner took from Thorkelin, Thorkelin from Suhm the Danish historian, and Suhm from Saxo Grammaticus. For they identified Beowulf with Bous, son of Odin, said by Saxo to have fallen in battle with Hother about that date. The historical source of the 'Romance' being so satisfactorily ascertained, it only remained to discover the poet, and the account of this new and strange poem would be complete. In this enquiry Turner was led, by the frequent repetition of the phrase, 'as I have heard say,' to confirm Thorkelin's opinion that this 'Author, in several places speaks as if he had been a contemporary of the

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events he describes,' but however, he adds by way of correction, 'this may be considered as a poetical licence.'

The next critic was Conybeare, whose 'Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry' appeared in 1826, and gave a new life to the study. The passages, which had suggested to his predecessors the idea of an author contemporary with the events of his narrative, are very differently understood by Conybeare. 'The writer speaks of his story as one of ancient days, and more than once appeals for his authority either to popular tradition or to some previously existing document.' He said further:—'The notion that the writer was cotemporary with his hero seems to be grounded on a misconstruction of some passages of the work, and is in effect contradicted by the general tenor of its language, and the highly marvellous tinge which is given to various parts of the story: such colouring, though in a traditional tale we might naturally expect to find it, would scarcely be ventured on by a cotemporary.' So, like a wise antiquarian who scans some huge and heavy monument of Pre-historic date, he feels that this strange and lonely relic belongs to a world of ideas with which he is unacquainted, that within the range of his knowledge there is no pedestal for it—he may describe, delineate, he may wonder, and even enjoy, but he cannot explain it. There is, however, a difference between a monument in stone and a monument in language. Of the latter we can at least say to what race it belongs, it bears in each lineament the family stamp. The Beowulf is an undoubted monument of the Anglian race, and it is constructed out of genuine popular traditions. This is as much as could be said about it in Conybeare's time.

In the year 1833 appeared the first English edition of the Beowulf-text, edited by J. M. Kemble, of Trinity College, Cambridge. It was a single volume, in 12mo, containing the text, with a Preface and Glossary, both short<sup>1</sup>. The text was an improvement on Thorkelin, but still very faulty;—to say nothing of inaccuracies from want of proper oversight as the sheets were passing through the press. The Glossary, though short, was a valuable acquisition. About twenty-three of the most archaic and difficult words were illustrated in a masterly style, which was then new. Through the aid of Comparative Philology, a science of which Kemble was one of the earliest exponents, the language of the Beowulf and of Anglo-Saxon poetry in general was much elucidated. But it is to the Preface of that volume that we must turn our attention, if we would see what progress had been made in the investigation of the materials of the narrative. This investigation is here pursued under two heads. I. Who were the princes represented as reigning in Denmark at the time of the events of our poem, and what is their date? II. As a more essential question, for determining the birth-place of the poem, Who was the hero himself, Beowulf; to what race did he belong?—In the histories of Denmark, from Saxo Grammaticus down to Holberg and Suhm, the names of Healfdene and Hrothgar and Halga are found, and Hrothgar is on the throne in the middle of the fifth century.

This then (it was argued) must give us the date of Beowulf and his adventures, if we follow the historical

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, the Traveller's Song, and The Battle of Finnesburh; edited, together with a Glossary of the more difficult words and an Historical Preface, by John M. Kemble, Esq., M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge. London, Pickering, 1833.



thread of the tale: for Beowulf comes from his own country to be the champion and deliverer of King Hrothgar, and his exploits in Hrothgar's service form the basis of our poem.

But who then was Beowulf? It is answered that he was an Angle, of that race which afterwards peopled the eastern region of our own island from Northumberland to Norfolk. This point—that Beowulf was an Angle—is one that Kemble, through much subsequent change of view, always stuck to in the main;—and it is a point that may possibly prove to be of some importance in the investigation before it is done with.

So much for the edition of 1833, the first that issued from an English press. Of this edition only 100 copies were printed;—and it was a happy limitation, as it left room for a new edition as early as 1835, in which the text was edited with far greater care. All the rest remained as before, and the Preface was reprinted word for word. Thus we see that as late as 1835 Kemble still regarded this Poem as a romantic extravagance, which the wild and weird imagination of the North had spun out of historical facts, and that the editor's task was not much more than just to restore the persons and events of the narrative to their proper place in history.

Further study led him to see the matter in a very different light. The process (which next followed) of translating the poem throughout, and of elaborating a much more complete Glossary, ensured for the text that close and prolonged attention through which alone could be gained any real insight into the nature of the composition. In the year 1837 appeared Kemble's prose Translation of the Beowulf with a Preface and Glossary; a book which may be said to have lifted the



study into its modern era<sup>1</sup>. In the Preface, which is quite new, he repeals all his former conclusions as founded upon a mistaken basis, namely, upon the supposition of a historical instead of a mythological groundwork: a mistake which he had inherited from the mediæval historians and their representative Suhm, the modern historian of Denmark. Thus the subject was for the first time placed upon its true level, and a sound basis was gained for progressive investigation. The Glossary was, what Thorpe afterwards called it, 'a copious and valuable glossary;'—such an illustration of our old poetic diction was a new thing in literature. It became the chief luminary of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and continued so to be until it was superseded by Grein's *Sprachschatz*, which took Kemble's work for its base and starting-point.

But the closer study of the text was not the only cause of Kemble's altered views. The Genealogies had recently engaged his attention, and these had opened his mind to the importance of the mythological basis in the *Beowulf*. Not that his views ever grew clear, but he had the insight to apprehend that there was somehow more in this part of the romance than he was able to define. In the year 1836, the year after his second edition of the text and before his translation, he published at Munich a treatise, 'Ueber die Stammtafel der Westsachsen.' In this work he broke new ground, and the matter of this book formed the basis of the Preface to his Translation which appeared in the following year.

The chief heads may be briefly summarized. It is

<sup>1</sup> A Translation of the Anglo-Saxon Poem of *Beowulf*, with a copious Glossary, Preface, and Philological Notes, by J. M. Kemble, Esq. London, Pickering, 1837.

well known that the races of the old world traced the pedigrees of their kings up to their gods. The old royal families of the Greeks were *Διογενεῖς*, that is to say, descended from Zeus, and all the Teutonic races derived their kings from Woden. Besides Woden, who is common to them all, each several nationality had its peculiar ancestor, in whose person their separate branch is united to the parent stock. An acquaintance with these names in their ethnological relations is of use in arranging the legends of antiquity.

The Prologue opens with the traditional glories of the reign of Scyld Scefing, to whom succeeds his son Beowulf. This is contained in a Prologue, which is not included in the numbering of the Cantos. The poem proper begins by taking up Beowulf again and saying that he ruled in the cities of the Scyldings, a mighty king for a long season, theme of nations:—but this is only a bridge or an inclined plane to let us down from the high mythological elevation to the level of the narrative.

The son of Beowulf (by a gigantic and capricious stride) is Healfdene, and he is succeeded by his son Hrothgar. The genealogy proceeds no further; it is under Hrothgar that the events of the poem are to occur. Now Healfdene and Hrothgar are reputed historical kings of Denmark, whom Suhm places in this order in the fifth century. Only then in the histories Healfdene's father and predecessor is as historical as himself; and he is not called Beowulf but Froda IV. So we have here a fragment of mythological genealogy rudely introduced into the twilight of legendary history. The connection of the three former with the two latter names is something like that between Zeus and Archidamus, or between Venus and Augustus.



To clear up our view we must first dispose of these three mythological names, Scef, Scyld, Beowulf. It must be observed that the Beowulf mentioned thus at the outset is not the hero of the narrative:—their positions are incompatible; and this is apt to cause some perplexity at first.

Who then (he asks) is the Beowulf of the Introduction? We must turn to the old genealogies. It has been the fashion to laugh down genealogies as soon as they pass above historic time, and perhaps there are some that deserve no better fate. But there are also some which contain authentic and valuable information for the clearing up of ancient legends and for the extending our knowledge of the human race both in their physical relations and mental development, under the unattractive guise of a catalogue of uncouth names. These far-descended and venerable names, which now look so strange to us, were once dear to some ancient people; these were the symbols of old and fond memories, which kept alive in kindred the idea of family unity and gave them a place and a title among the nations. Several such genealogies of Saxon and Angle kings are still extant. There is one in the Public Library at Cambridge; one in the Library at Paris: and the Saxon Chronicle has many which are less complete and professional, but which must be considered as of high authority. These all go back to Woden, at least; some much higher. According to the results of Kemble's investigation the genuine pedigree mounts fifteen stages above Woden, so that Woden is the sixteenth. Now just in the centre of these fifteen, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth places respectively, we find the three names Scef, Scyld, Beow. The placing of these names is not indeed rigidly identical in the

various genealogies, but it is important to remember that they are always found in some part or other of the lineage, always the three together, and always in the same order, Scaef, Scyld, Beow. This trio may be displaced as a whole, it may even be so far shifted as to be put below Woden, but it is never broken.

These are the three names with which our Poem opens, and which are brought into sudden and abrupt contiguity with the comparatively recent Healfdene and Hrothgar. Beow is the same as Beowulf; the name is also found as Beowine and in other forms. The first part Beow is the essential word. But this word in whatever form is no ordinary proper name of a man, it is utterly unknown in history. No historical man was ever called Beowulf or Beow. This fact, united with the exalted mythological position we see him occupying along with Scef and Scyld in the Olympus of the North, will therefore assure us of the soundness of the conclusion that Beow is a divine personage. Kemble apprehended the character in the two positions as radically one, as one that, being in essence the same, had passed through successive stages of representation; let down from Beowulf the god to Beowulf the mortal son of Ecgtheow, through the intermediate step of the heroic Beowulf the Scylding. But after all this investigation he concluded with the disappointing admission that it is not easy to account for this Prelude, which really throws no light on the poem, nor in any way helps the narrative<sup>1</sup>.—Thus far I have thought it worth while to pursue the argument of this famous Preface, because, although the contents have since been sifted, and what is retained is now

<sup>1</sup> We shall in the sequel see reason to think otherwise. Meanwhile let it be noted that this was how Kemble left it.



among scholars common knowledge, yet the epoch and process of their exposition is still an important element, not only in the literary history, but even in the appreciation of this newly-discovered Epic.

One remark has yet to be added about this Translation. In this volume Kemble first pointed out the connexion between the story of Thrytho in 1932 ff., and *The Lives of the Two Offas*, which were edited by Wats with the works of Matthew Paris. This was not only a valuable contribution to the understanding of the text, but also (perhaps) an important link in the chain of reasoning which will lead to the solution of our problem.

After Kemble the discussion passed into Germany, and for half a century the Beowulf has been a prolific subject in that country. The first German criticism of this poem was by Heinrich Leo, of Halle. Leo's ideas of the Beowulf were published under the title *Ueber Beowulf*, von H. Leo. Halle, 1839<sup>1</sup>. He considered that the poem was in bulk heathen, but with some Christian modifications of a superficial nature, such as the removal of the names of the heathen gods. The narrative is in the main mythical, but with some historical additions, especially the part of Hygelac (the Chochilaicus of Gregory of Tours). He placed Hygelac's realm in Jutland.

Leo did not agree with those who thought that the poem had been brought from Denmark to England,

<sup>1</sup> In his Preface (wherein he used archaic spelling, instigated by endeavour after improvements in orthography which are now spreading) he assigns it as one of the motives of his studies that the beauty of Anglo-Saxon literature might be better appreciated in Germany:—*mir sehr vil daran ligt, teils dasz dieser schöne zweig unsrer deutschen litteratur, die angelsächsische, weiter in Deutschland gewürdigt werde, teils dasz, &c.*

because the peculiar traits of Northern mythology are markedly absent; nor could he admit its origination in England, as it takes no notice either of Angles or of Saxons; he therefore assigned it to the old country of Angeln in Sleswick as the only hypothesis remaining.

Then, as to its date—seeing that Hygelac (Chochilaicus) died about 520, and his son Heardred reigned after him for some years, and then counting the long reign of Beowulf, he arrived at the conclusion that our poem was composed about A.D. 580. The poem was transplanted to Britain with the latest movements of the immigration; and this explains (he thinks) why it is so well preserved, because it was so early detached from the soil of its growth and it became fixed, like the Northern Sagas in Iceland.

Closely contemporaneous with Heinrich Leo was Ludwig Ettmüller, of Zürich; the first German translator of the Beowulf. In 1840 he published a Translation in alliterative verse and in archaic German<sup>1</sup>. Many years afterwards (1867), Grein recognized the great merit of this Translation, but said it was almost unreadable for its *Unwörter*; much as it was said of Spenser, that he ‘writ no language<sup>2</sup>.’ This version corresponds to the original almost line for line, although the translator in his Preface disclaims this exactness. In his Preface he abandoned as hopeless the endeavour to trace any connexion of thought between the mythic Beowulf of the Prologue and the quasi-historical Beowulf of the

<sup>1</sup> The title is:—BEOWULF. Heldengedicht des achten Jahrhunderts.—Zum ersten Male aus dem Angelsächsischen in das Neuhochdeutsche stabreimend übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen versehen, von Ludwig Ettmüller. Mit einem Kärtchen. Zürich, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> Eine Uebersetzung, die bei ihren sonstigen groszen Verdiensten leider durch eine wahre Flut von Unwörtern fast unlesbar ist. *Beowulf*, von Chrn. W. M. Grein, 1867: p. 182.



subsequent narrative, and this incongruity was for him an evidence against the unity of the poem. In fact he was ready to accept any evidence which jumped with the reigning theory; and when towards the close of his Preface he observed that in the interval between the fall of Hygelac and the completion of the *Beowulf* the poem had undergone more than one redaction, he thinks it proof enough to say that no one will doubt it who has ever so little knowledge of the way in which the heroic tales came into existence. 'Accordingly I think I am not too bold if I assert, that the *Beowulf* consisted originally of separate lays, which in process of time were combined into one whole.' The combiners were first clerics, but the art soon spread to other literary craftsmen. The clerics inserted corrective or edifying matter of their own, and Ettmüller thought he could discern the process of this editorial officiousness, and separate the original poetry from the later moralizing of the poetaster. Accordingly, he distinguished by a set-off in the typography those lines which he attributed to his clerical editor. He had little else to guide him except the moral or spiritual tone of the condemned passages. I will exhibit a few lines as a specimen:—

Zur Nacht man da Nothwunder schauet,  
 Feu'r auf der Fluth. Kein so Fruter lebt  
 1380 der Menschensöhne, der diesen Moorgrund kenne.—  
 Ob auch der Heideläufer, von Hunden geängstigt,  
 der hornstarke Hirsch, den Holzwald suche,  
 fernhin geflüchtet: eh das Ferch er giebt  
 das Leben, am Lande, eh in die Lach' er springet,  
 1385 das Haupt zu hüten: nicht ist's geheurer Ort!  
 Der Fluthen Gemeng fernhin aufspritzt,  
 wild zu den Wolken, wenn der Wind aufstœrt  
 leide Gewitter, bis die Luft sich schwärzet,  
 die Himmel hallen.—Die Hülfe nun wieder



a skilful hand as Thorpe is an important incident in the history of the text, and it was upon the strength of this collation (made three years before Kemble's first edition) that Thorpe claimed a particular value for his readings. He said moreover :—‘Very shortly after I had collated it, the manuscript suffered still further detriment.’

Thorpe had a theory about the origin of the poem which must be given in his own words :—

With respect to this the oldest heroic poem in any Germanic tongue, my opinion is, that it is not an original production of the Anglo-Saxon muse, but a metrical paraphrase of an heroic Saga composed in the south-west of Sweden, in the old common language of the North, and probably brought to this country during the sway of the Danish dynasty. It is in this light only that I can view a work evincing a knowledge of Northern localities and persons hardly to be acquired by a native of England in those days of ignorance with regard to remote foreign parts. And what interest could an Anglo-Saxon feel in the valorous feats of his deadly foes, the Northmen? in the encounter of a Sweo-Gothic hero with a monster in Denmark? or with a fire-drake in his own country? The answer, I think, is obvious—*none whatever.* . . . . . From the allusions to Christianity contained in the poem, I do not hesitate to regard it as a Christian paraphrase of a heathen Saga and those allusions as interpolations of the paraphrast, whom I conceive to have been a native of England of Scandinavian parentage.

The studies of Mr. Daniel Haigh led him to a very different conclusion as to the soil on which the story grew. He thought its cradle was Northumbria, and the author of the *Beowulf* a Northumbrian poet<sup>1</sup>. This he supported by peculiarities of dialect in the text, and also by a whole scheme of topographical identifications with the details of the narrative. He matches Heorot with Hart co. Durham; and whereas it is said that a mile from Heorot (so he understood

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Sagas; An Examination of their Value as Aids to History; A Sequel to the ‘History of the Conquest of Britain by the Saxons.’ By Daniel H. Haigh. London: John Russell Smith, 1861.

same time a foregone sentence upon the nature of its composition. That great works in early literature forsooth were not made by art and device, but that they grew spontaneously and blindly, this was that imagination in the air which attended the first entertainment of Beowulf in the Fatherland. The same strain of criticism it is which has produced a theory of fortuitous accretion for the Gospels, a theory which Rénan with glib and facile touch has summed up as follows:—‘Each reader transcribed in the margin of his copy the words, the parables, which he found elsewhere, and which touched him. Thus has the finest thing in the world issued from an obscure process working entirely without authority<sup>1</sup>.’

In 1855 appeared Thorpe’s edition, printed in short lines, with translation parallel<sup>2</sup>. From the first words of the Preface we learn that it was nearly a quarter of a century since he had begun to put his hand to this work.

Twenty-four years have passed since, while residing in Denmark, I first entertained the design of one day producing an edition of Beowulf; and it was in prosecution of that design that, immediately on my arrival in England in 1830, I carefully collated the text of Thorke-  
lin’s edition with the Cottonian manuscript.

This is an important statement; and if the reader bears in mind the condition of the manuscript as above recorded, he will easily see the ground of its importance. As the scorched edges of the leaves were at that time still chipping away, being, in Thorpe’s own words, ‘as friable as touchwood;’ a collation made in 1830 by such

<sup>1</sup> ‘La plus belle chose du monde est ainsi sortie d’une élaboration obscure et complètement populaire.’

<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, the Scôp or Gleeman’s Tale, and the Fight at Finnesburg; with a literal Translation, Notes, Glossary, &c. By Benjamin Thorpe, &c. Oxford, John Henry Parker, 1855.



These conflicting views seemed not irreconcilable to the ingenious mind of Mr. H. Morley, whose theory as expressed in 'First Sketch of English Literature' contains elements both from Mr. Thorpe and Mr. Haigh :—

The original scene of the story of this poem was probably a corner of that island of Sæland upon which now stands the capital of Denmark, the corner which lies opposite to Gothland the southern promontory of Sweden. But if so, he, who in this country told the old story in English metre, did not paint the scenery of Sæland, but that which he knew. A twelve mile walk by the Yorkshire coast from Whitby northward to the top of Bowlby cliff makes real to the imagination all the country of Beowulf as we find it in the poem. Thus we are almost tempted to accept a theory which makes that cliff—the highest on our coast—the ness upon which Beowulf was buried, and on the slope of which—Bowlby then being read as the corrupted form of Beowulfesby—Beowulf once lived with his hearth-sharers. High sea-cliffs worn into holes or 'nicker-houses many' with glens rocky and wooded running up into great moors are not characters of the coast of Sæland opposite to Sweden, but they are special characters of that corner of Yorkshire in which the tale of Beowulf seems to have been told as it now comes to us in First English Verse.

Between 1857 and 1867 appeared the work of C. W. M. Grein. He dated from Cassel, 28 May, 1857. On the whole it may be said, without hesitation, that Grein's output was of such eminence as to dwarf all other labours, before or since, upon Anglo-Saxon poetry in general, and upon the Beowulf in particular.

He began in the right order, with a Collection of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in two volumes, of which the first appeared in 1857 and the second in the following year. The titles of these volumes conveyed the promise of a Glossary<sup>1</sup>. These two volumes of texts were closely

<sup>1</sup> Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie. In kritisch bearbeiteten Texten, und mit vollständigem Glossar, herausgegeben von C. W. M. Grein. Erster Band, Text I. Goettingen, 1857.—Zweiter Band, Text II. 1858.

followed by two volumes of translations, which, though not quite coextensive with the texts, comprised the most important of the poems, and among them the *Beowulf*<sup>1</sup>.

In his Preface to the first-named volume, the author began by saying that nothing but lack of apparatus kept back Anglo-Saxon studies in Germany from an extension commensurate with their worth. English scholars had done much, but their books were dear, and a German might think himself lucky if he found the Anglo-Saxon book he wanted even in his University Library. This difficulty was felt more especially in regard to English Lexicons; and as for the German ones, namely, those of Etzmüller and Bouterwek, they were insufficient.

He made rather a solemn profession of loyalty to his originals. He had held it his first duty to 'rescue' the readings of the manuscripts, where that was possible (*galt als erste Pflicht, handschriftliche Lesarten, wo es nur immer möglich war, zu retten*);—and where he was compelled to admit emendation, either of his own or of others, he still tried in every case to stick as close as possible to the form transmitted. In fact, the passion for emendation had run rather wild, and the conservative reaction had now set in with Professor Dietrich of Marburg and his disciple Grein<sup>2</sup>.

When in 1858 he published his second volume, completing the texts, he accompanied it with a devout

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtungen der Angelsachsen, stabreimend übersetzt*, von C. W. M. Grein. Erster Band, Goettingen, 1857.—Zweiter Band, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> In particular the emendations of Bouterwek he regarded as wanton, and he would not include them among his various readings. 'Die Angabe der grossen Masse theils unnöthiger theils allzu willkürlicher Textveränderungen *Bouterweks* hielt ich für nutzlos: wer Geschmack daran findet, mag sie bei B. selbst nachsehen.'



wish that it might help to make Anglo-Saxon poetry wider known<sup>1</sup>.

In 1861 and 1864 appeared the two volumes of the promised Glossary, a noble monument of constancy and devotion<sup>2</sup>. In the Preface he regrets that nearly half of this first volume was in print before he had opportunity of using the newly-discovered Epic fragment of Waldere, which at the same time explains why it is absent from his texts<sup>3</sup>.

It is sad to think that he was not allowed to enjoy his achievement sweetened with the sense of universal approbation. The second volume of the Glossary contains 'A Word in Self-defence'<sup>4</sup> written in answer to a hostile review of the first volume. He protests against the attack as a disgrace to the literature of criticism. Anonymous reviewing (he complains) is unfair to the reader, who has a right to know the authority that pretends to guide his judgment; and at the same time it exempts the writer from the salutary restraint of responsibility, while he levels at his victim from behind a hedge. Hence the development of a villainous art, the art of literary defamation, which consists in hunting up those imperfections which are inseparable from every human work, placing these in the foreground, at the same time ignoring the merits, or,

<sup>1</sup> 'Möge durch meine Ausgabe die Beschäftigung mit den Schätzen der angelsächsischen Poesie, die es in so hohem Grade verdienen und bei denen noch gar manche Schwierigkeit zu überwinden ist, in immer weiteren Kreissen angeregt werden!'

<sup>2</sup> *Sprachschatz der Angelsächsischen Dichter*, bearbeitet von C. W. M. Grein, Dr. Phil.; Erster Band, Cassel und Göttingen, 1861.—Zweiter Band, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> The discoverer to whom we owe this precious addition to our Epic stores was Dr. George Stephens, Professor of English Literature at Copenhagen.

<sup>4</sup> Ein Wort der Abwehr!

if the merits cannot be altogether ignored, just giving them a cursory recognition and damning them with faint praise. Such reviewers disdain to consider what was the aim of their author and how far he has realized its attainment; but setting up some arbitrary standard of their own, condemn him for not fulfilling what he had never promised or intended.

Why do I dwell over that which is notoriously the opprobrium of literature? Surely not for the pleasure of recording offences and quarrels! No. But this affair is so intimately related to what is most essential in the present sketch, that it could not be passed over in silence.

Before this second volume was issued to the public, when Grein set his hand to it for the last time, he was in a position to name the reviewer who had so embittered his work. It was no other than Karl Müllenhoff, a name which was to become hardly less celebrated in Beowulf literature than that of Grein, though his celebrity was to rest on very different grounds. The attack on Grein's Anglo-Saxon work was not sufficient, it was followed by virulent depreciation of his edition of *Hildebrand*, an Old High German Epic fragment. In vol. ii. of the Glossary, Grein wrote:—'The ground of his hostility is now clear; it is just because I do not fall in with his blind reverence and idolatry of Lachmann.' This was dated October 17, 1864. Two years before this date, Grein had in 1862 made the Beowulf the subject of his Marburg dissertation, and he had said distinctly—'I hold this poem, as it lies before us, for the connected work of a single poet<sup>1</sup>.' Such a sentiment was quite enough to account for Müllenhoff's hostility.

<sup>1</sup> This Essay was printed in Ebert's *Jahrbuch für Englische und Romanische Literatur*, iv. 260-285.



We shall have another work of Grein's to mention, but first we must return to Denmark. Grundtvig seems never to have neglected the *Beowulf*, although in middle life, being drawn away by a diversity of interests, he was outstripped by German assiduity. Grein was the one, of all the Germans, to whose opinion he attached the greatest weight. From time to time he published some new observation or discovery. In 1849 he pointed out in 'Brage og Idun' iv. 194 that *merewioingas* in 2921 was 'the Merovingian,' the Frankish king. This had never been observed before, but it was at once universally accepted.

The interest of this discovery was greatly enhanced by Bachlechner in Haupt's *Zeitschrift* vii, when he pointed out that the word is correctly formed after the phonetic laws of the Northern dialect. For the Frankish *Merewig*, which in Southern English would also be *Merewig*, would in the north regularly become *Merewio*, as Northumbrian *Oswio* answers to West Saxon *Answig*. This was an observation of great importance as bearing upon the question of the original dialect in which the *Beowulf* was written, and the instance was exempt from much of the uncertainty which has attended similar arguments in favour of a northern original. The great difficulty in such instances has risen from uncertainty as to how much should be allowed for the carelessness of copyists. In this case the appearance of the manuscript suggests that the transcriber had regarded the word with peculiar caution, and had copied it mechanically, as not understanding it, and therefore not venturing to reduce it to the West Saxon standard of orthography<sup>1</sup>.

Another valuable observation of Grundtvig's was

<sup>1</sup> F. Rönning, *Beowulfs-Kvadet*, p. 96.

this, that the friendly tone of the poem towards the Danes indicates for the poem a date older than the Viking Age. Good use was afterwards made of this suggestion by Rönning<sup>1</sup>.

In 1861 appeared Grundtvig's edition of the text, with an Introduction and some critical notes, which were written in Danish. It is dedicated to the memory of his early patron, Johan Bülow, knight of the order of the Elephant. The edition contains some good suggestions, but on the whole it cannot be said to have fulfilled the promise of the author's youthful achievement. It is printed in short lines, and as a peculiar feature of this edition it is to be noted that the fragment of The Battle of Finsburg, usually edited apart, is here treated as if it had fallen out of this poem, and is embodied after line 2216 (i.e. after 1106 *syððan sceolde*, in the long-line editions). No one has followed Grundtvig's example in this respect.

In one sense Grundtvig's edition of 1861 was an epoch-making book. It was in this book that the tide of conjectural emendation reached its height. Grundtvig had been singularly happy in those early emendations of the text of Thorkelin which he published in his *Bjowulfs Drape* in 1820. At that time he had never seen the manuscript; he had nothing to guide him but Thorkelin's text and his own acquired knowledge of the Epic and its diction. Almost all his corrections proved to be identical with the reading of the manuscript. This was a triumph for Grundtvig which decided his qualification as a critic, and gave him almost a demonstrated right to correct the manuscript itself. It is easy to understand how an early success of this kind might foster in after years a passion for

<sup>1</sup> Rönning, *Beowulfs-Kvadet*, p. 101.



new discoveries tending to remodel the text. And when, after an interval of full forty years, Grundtvig at length published his text, the freedom of emendation and suggestion which characterized the book was no more than seemed natural, at least in him.

But now came the reaction. Dietrich of Marburg vindicated the text of the manuscript in a number of passages which he discussed in Haupt's *Zeitschrift* xi, in an article entitled 'Rettungen.' The effect of Dietrich's vindication was soon manifest in Heyne's edition of 1863, and in Grein's separate edition, which appeared in 1867. In his first revision of the text, that which appeared in his *Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie*, Grein had been very free with his emendations, but now he showed a much greater respect for the readings of the manuscript, and justified many which had been slighted before. In 1868 appeared Heyne's second edition, which continued to maintain the conservative reaction.

But the liberty of criticism could not be always curbed. At length Professor Sophus Bugge of Christiania broke ground with notes, comments, and emendations in *Tidskrift* viii. In 1871 Professor Rieger (in *Zacher* iii. p. 381) claimed more freedom of emendation, and on this ground he welcomed the observations of Bugge. He agrees with him in almost every particular, and proceeds to contribute *Beiträge* of his own. Many an old emendation which Heyne and Grein had agreed to reject he takes under his patronage, if only to break a tradition that was threatening to harden into a dogmatic scholasticism.

I will assume this to be the chronological place of Max Rieger<sup>1</sup>, a critic of remarkable acumen, whose

<sup>1</sup> He published an Anglo-Saxon 'Lesebuch' at Giessen in 1861.

contributions, if not numerous, have been very valuable. In Zacher's *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, iii. 414, he called attention to the name Hunferð, and pointed out that in all the three places in which this name occurs, the alliteration is vocalic, and that the name must accordingly be *Unferð*. This is now universally accepted.

He also observed that the same is the case with *hond-slyht*, which occurs twice, and in both cases requires a vocalic alliteration, and accordingly must be *ond-slyht*, that is *and-slyht*, an inference which has also been adopted.

Such observations have an interest which extends beyond the mere ascertainment of the text, for they have a bearing upon the question (which is raised by other appearances as well as these), whether the poem was not originally written in the Northumbrian dialect, and consequently whether the poet may not have been an Anglian, perhaps inhabiting one of the northern monasteries.

In Grein's separate edition, of 1867, he professed to have taken Grundtvig's text for the basis of his revision. This has nothing to do with Grundtvig's emendations, which were kept clear of the text. Grein took this text to be the fullest representative of the manuscript for very definite reasons. Not only had Grundtvig been in England from 1829 to 1831 with abundant opportunity for repeated collation of the manuscript, but he had moreover at hand the two transcripts of Thorkelin which were made in 1786. The whole of the extant sources had been in Grundtvig's possession as they had never been at the command of any other editor; and he had used them in



such a way as to present the transmitted text quite apart from editorial interposition.

This separate edition of Grein's is in many ways an interesting little book. For one thing, it contains a brief and rapid sketch of Beowulf literature up to date, with occasional estimates of quality, which are valuable because they are at once competent and honest. It is from this sketch that I have drawn his estimate of Grundtvig's text. Of Simrock's alliterative verse translation (1859) he says that in this as in his similar translation of the Heliand, the right distribution of the alliteration, which is the cardinal point in this poetic form, has been made too little of; and consequently the translation does not convey a true impression of the old alliterative poetry. He also notices Moritz Heyne's critical edition of the text (1863) and his poetical version which appeared at the same time, praising the translation, but disapproving the metre, which is the iambic of ten syllables<sup>1</sup>. The text of M. Heyne was the one that became popular as a class-book, and its fifth edition appeared in 1888 (*Fünfte Auflage, besorgt von Adolf Socin*), so that I have enjoyed the use of it, although my work was mainly done before this date, and was consequently based on the fourth edition. If there are any improvements in the fifth which I have not embodied, it is (I think) more likely to be due to tacit conservatism on my part than to oversight.

In the catalogue of those Germans who have come to the front in Beowulf studies, the next name, Müllenhoff, is one that has reached a peculiar promi-

<sup>1</sup> Eine tüchtige Uebersetzung, bei der nur leider die Wahl des Metrums (fünffüszige Jamben!) eine höchst verfehlte genannt werden muss, p. 184.



nence. This celebrated scholar was born in 1818 and died in 1886. He attended Lachmann's course on the Nibelungen in the winter of 1840-1. This is the first characterizing fact recorded of Müllenhoff in the life-sketch prefixed by H. Lübke to the posthumous reprint (1889) of *Beowulf: Untersuchungen*. That Lachmann's criticism was sound, and not only so, but that it was to be the standard of all sound criticism upon ancient Epics, is supposed in all this branch of German literature to go without saying. How early Müllenhoff began his trenchant work upon the Beowulf, his biographer is not able to say precisely, but that from his very first acquaintance with the Anglo-Saxon Epic he regarded it as a work in which unity was not to be thought of—this he (the biographer) takes to be a matter of course<sup>1</sup>. It was the publication of Grein's *Bibliothek* in 1857 that kindled his ardour and first set him to work in earnest<sup>2</sup>. The years of his greatest literary activity were 1860-8. It was in the latter year that he completed his best known work *Die Innere Geschichte des Beowulfs*, which appeared in 1869 in Haupt's *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, Band XIV.

Müllenhoff announced his conclusions without much proof or reasoning about them, merely saying that the question of the origin and construction of the poem had hardly been touched as yet, for that Ettmüller had not done much;—but that he himself had worked

<sup>1</sup> *Beowulf: Untersuchungen* (1889), Vorwort, p. vi.—die einsicht dass das ganze kein einheitliches werk sei ist natürlich bei Müllenhoff so alt wie die erste bekanntschaft mit dem gedicht; aber wie früh er selbst das kritische messer angelegt hat, darüber habe ich nur eine vermuthung.

<sup>2</sup> Lübke says:—In der that gab das erscheinen der Bibliothek erst den anstoss zu der streng philologischen richtung in Müllenhoff's angelsächsischen studien.—Vorwort, p. vii.

seriously at it, had taken it up more than twenty years ago, had in the interval tested his results seven times over in so many courses of Beowulf lectures; and as he cannot further improve the work he lays it before the public.

It is 'simple enough.' Apart from the introduction 1-193, about the Danish kings and Hrothgar's hall and his tribulation, the poem falls into four sections:—

- I. 194-836. Beowulf's fight with Grendel;
- II. 837-1628. Beowulf's fight with the mere-wife;
- III. 1629-2199. Beowulf's return home;
- IV. 2200-3183. Beowulf's dragon-fight and death.

The first and last sections contain each of them an ancient Lay by different authors. This observation is a base of operations. The critic proceeds to trace the succession of hands that have brought the poem into its present form. Section II was added by one hand as a continuation to I, and the Prologue was put in by another hand. A third hand, whom the critic designates by the letter A, added Section III, interpolating I and II at the same time, to make them harmonize with his addition. So far then we are to understand that A had outlined the poem down to line 2199. A fourth hand (or, if we count the two old poets of the two original Lays, a sixth), whom the critic calls B, made it his business to adapt A's work to the ancient Lay of Section IV; and he also amplified the whole by inserting episodes from extraneous myths, with various other additions, mostly wretched theologizing stuff. The chief interpolator is B; he, as well as A, had the old Lays before him in written form.

This is what he calls 'simple enough.' I can only say it is a great deal too ingenious and intricate for me; and that I am not able to see how it all arises naturally



and legitimately out of the phenomena of the poem. To me it appears entirely fanciful and artificial, the product of a mind possessed with intense devotion for a venerable theory, which had hardened into an inveterate scholastic dogma. My own impression is that in Müllenhoff's criticism of the Beowulf we have a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Wolffian hypothesis, and that by and bye less will be heard of it than heretofore.

But all this straining after the impossible has been useful for the elucidation of the text in so far as zeal for theory has wonderfully sharpened the keen eye of observation. The study of the Beowulf has been over and over again greatly indebted to the shrewd remarks of Müllenhoff.

The minute examination of the text has been stimulated by the passionate desire of demonstrating that the poem is not what it seems, a poetical unit, the work of an author, but that it is a cluster of older and later material fortuitously aggregated, in short, that it is not that highly organized thing which is called a Poem, the life of which is found in unity of purpose and harmony of parts, but that, on the contrary, it is a thing of low organism, which is nowise injured by being torn asunder, inasmuch as the life of it resides in the parts and not in the whole—a thing without a core or any organic centre.

The chief value of Müllenhoff's work lies in his occasional and incidental and (so to say) spontaneous contributions to the elucidation of the poem. Whatever he says about the mythology merits attention, for he had made an earnest and, so far as I know, an unbiassed study of this subject. Hence I attach great value to his *obiter dictum* that the character of Heremod is not mythological but fictitious and allegorical.



Bright shoots of vivid insight every now and then start out from the plodding beat of his Lachmannic drudgery. It was no inherited theory but an inner eye that made him divine in 12-25 a contemporary and probably a political allusion.

With the same insight he saw that 1931-1962 must have sprung up on Mercian soil, where the old continental Offa was a revered and familiar name. He saw further that the story of the two Offas were reflex to one another, but his theory prevented him from the natural inference. I think he was right in apprehending that the Beowulf sprang up, not in any monastery, but in a royal court, though his reason for that opinion does not strike me as very forcible<sup>1</sup>.

In 1876 appeared the first edition of Beowulf by an Oxford man<sup>2</sup>. In early days the Oxford Professor of Anglo-Saxon, as above related, had done much to awaken an interest in this Epic, but no edition had as yet proceeded from Oxford. There was also something novel in the form of this book. A handsome octavo, such as is sometimes spoken of as 'a library edition,' it contained a prose translation and foot-notes on the same page with the text, not wholly but somewhat after the pattern of that much admired book, Dante's *Inferno* by Dr. Carlyle. But the most signal innovation (for England) was in the long lines. This was a German fashion, all previous English editions

<sup>1</sup> He grounded it on the Merovingian allusion in 2920 f.:—an einem angelsächsischen königshofe müssen wir uns doch den Beowulf entstanden denken. *Untersuchungen*, ed. 1889; p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> BEOWULF: A Heroic Poem of the Eighth Century, with a Translation, Notes, and Appendix, by Thomas Arnold, M.A., Editor of Wyclif's English Works: of University College, Oxford. Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876.

(as well as the Danish) had been printed in short lines, or, as the Germans say, 'half-lines.'

This edition had a literary Introduction, and in it the author added yet another theory about the origin of the poem. Starting with the conviction that, if we put aside two or three passages, the entire poem, as we have it, is the work of one hand, he proceeds to say that the author was a Christian and most likely an ecclesiastic, and, as he had already shown reasons for assigning the poem to the *early part of* the eighth century, he adds that this time is characterized by the missionary efforts of the Anglo-Saxons among their kindred on the mainland. One of these, Willibrord, visiting Denmark from Friesland, obtained permission from the king of Denmark to take thirty young Danes back with him into Friesland for Christian education. Now these youths doubtless had tales and songs about their earlier kings Healfdene and Hrothgar, and also about a famous hero in 'Got-land' called Beowulf, lodged in their memories and dear to their hearts. Some Anglo-Saxon priest, a lover of old poetry, saw in these materials the making of a great poem. This opportunity would be, for such a man, very fascinating. The genealogies in the Chronicles, and a tantalizing scrap of mythology preserved by Ethelwerd, indicate that memories of the period anterior to the migration into Britain were always attractive to the imagination of the Anglo-Saxons. 'In some such a way as this (concludes Mr. Arnold) I account for the origin of *Beowulf*.'

In 1882 the Early English Text Society published a complete Facsimile of the Manuscript, under the editorship of Professor Julius Zupitza.

In 1883 appeared a systematic treatise on the Beowulf



in Danish by F. Rönning. He started with a brief retrospect of the fortunes of the poem and of the part that Danish scholars had borne in its modern history.

It is Denmark that has the honour of having taken the first step in the publication of this celebrated poem, inasmuch as Thorkelin in 1786 took a copy of it and procured another transcript besides; it was in Denmark that the first edition of the poem appeared, and it was a Danish man who produced the first translation of it. Our land has accordingly played a certain part in the earlier history of the *Beowulf*, but it has not continued to the end in accordance with the beginning. Grundtvig certainly never quite neglected the favorite study of his youth, as is proved by the edition of the poem which he published at an advanced age: but, with the exception of him, this poem has received comparatively little attention from the learned men of Denmark. It is to the honour of the Germans that they have given to the poem the deepest and most searching treatment it has received, especially as regards its structure, its language, and its mythological contents<sup>1</sup>.

Rönning's work was a solid addition to *Beowulf*-literature. The first motive of the author was to oppose the theory of Müllenhoff, who treated the *Beowulf* as one school of critics treated the *Iliad*, and made it out to be rather an accretion of lays, than a product of poetic design. Dr. Rönning, in opposing this Wolffian treatment of the poem, does not deny that it embodies earlier songs; only he maintains that such songs were but as raw material which was used and moulded by one poet into the organic and artistic whole which is now before us.

Müllenhoff had discovered six different authors, of which the two first were oral poets, but the third had a written copy of the rudimentary work as it then existed. His reasons are all reducible to two, namely, that

<sup>1</sup> *Beovulfs-Kvadet. En Literær-historisk Undersøgelse, af F. Rönning. Köbenhavn, 1883.*—It should however be noted, in regard to this literary estimate of Rönning's, that the part of Kemble seems to have escaped his notice.



there are inconsistencies in the narrative, and that there are variations in tone and style. Rönning meets him on both grounds:—he reviews a considerable number of Müllenhoff's alleged inconsistencies, and shows that they are inadequate to support the argument which he has built upon them. In the same manner he also controverts Müllenhoff's argument from alleged variations in tone and style, and shows that such variations afford no ground for the conclusion that the poem has been the work of six different authors. The reasoning is done so well, that the reader continues reading for the pleasure which the exposition affords him, long after he has ceased to have any doubt that needs to be cleared away.

Rönning's own impression of the origin of the poem has much affinity with the ideas of Haigh. He imagines the poet as an ecclesiastic, and a native of Northumbria, probably inhabiting some one of the northern monasteries. He does not agree with Haigh that the material is originally English, for he holds that the cradle of the songs was South Sweden, the home of the hero. But he thinks that the evidences of Haigh are substantial, that they prove a localization of the story about Hartlepool, and that they support the theory of a Northumbrian poet. Then as to the date. Regarding Hygelac as the centre and germ of the story, and identifying him with Chochilaicus;—his death in A.D. 520 gives a date for the rise of the songs, and these reached England with the immigrants in the sixth century, and were at length in the eighth century worked up into an artistic poem.

The German method of studying what they call the Inner History (*die innere Geschichte*) of this poem is to

begin by forming an imaginary idea of the original Epic, and then to employ this ideal for a standard of criticism. Professor Ten Brink, the latest author who has worked upon these lines, has avowed this method in the most frank and unreserved manner, pleading that every attempt at *à priori* reasoning in this field *must* move in a circle. Of course it must; the remark is incontestable;—but is it not the natural inference that the *à priori* method is therefore essentially hollow and unfit to carry any superstructure?

Professor Ten Brink describes, in a few lines, what is his ideal of the English Epic in its oral stage, and it is briefly this;—that the oral Epic was simple in outline and plain in style, and therefore the contradictions, irregularities, inversions (*Hysteroprotera*) and intolerable repetitions (*die unerträglichen Wiederholungen*) which swarm in the text of *Beowulf* can only be explained by the gradual accretion of heterogeneous elements in the process of transmission<sup>1</sup>.

Professor Ten Brink acknowledges that he has but one argument of an external nature and that he does not expect this one to prove very convincing. But, though it certainly is, as it ought to be, unconvincing; it is nevertheless important, because it is an argument that is calculated to arrest attention, and therefore it must be considered. It is this. The religious Epic poems do not exhibit the like irregularities. But these religious poems, such as the *Andreas*, *Elene*, *Juliana*, *Judith*, are admittedly written in imitation of that heathen Epic of which *Beowulf* is our best representative. His argument is, that if such irregularities had belonged to the early Epic, they would have been

<sup>1</sup> *Quellen und Forschungen*; LXII. *Beowulf*. Untersuchungen von B. Ten Brink. Stuttgart, 1888, p. 3 f.



reproduced in the religious Epic. But the obvious answer is, that the religious Epic belongs to the latter part of a period which was progressive in literary habits. The stories of the religious Epic are drawn, not from oral tradition, but from books; and the natural effect of this circumstance joined with the newly awakened literary ambition is seen in the greater orderliness of the arrangement.

The fact is, that the theory about the simplicity of the earliest Epic, which is claimed for a self-evident axiom, is contrary to all evidence if not to all probability. The original Epic was a literature (if I may so speak) without letters, without writing; it was dependent upon memory; it was transmitted by the living voice; and the effect of this medium was not the golden simplicity too fondly attributed to it, but the very reverse,—a voluble and rambling loquacity. This is the natural character of the Lay, and still more of the Epic which is a compilation of Lays.

The religious Epic is a development by itself, which, though formally imitative of the old Epic, was produced under altered conditions. It belongs to the tenth and early eleventh century, and is characterized by the regularity of an age recently converted to literary habits. After the Norman Conquest, the romance poetry reverted in a measure to its natural form, and it has been justly characterized as 'rambling<sup>1</sup>.' This is the natural character of all romantic poetry, this is its very birth-mark;—a fact to surprise no one who considers that this poetry is the nearest extant representative of that unwritten literature which from the very nature of things was undisciplined and loquacious.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Palgrave in *The Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1888.

I will give an illustration of this point, which, though partial in its incidence, is, I think, pertinent. Among the stupid inversions (die krassen Hysteroprotera as Ten Brink calls them) charged to the account of our Beowulf-text, there is perhaps none more gratuitous, and irrational, than the trick I am going to mention. It repeatedly happens, after the formula which announces a set speech, 'Hrothgar made a speech' (Hroðgar maðelode), that instead of the speech we get a parenthesis, sometimes expanded into a small digression, before the speech comes on. A striking example of this occurs at line 1687, where Hrothgar is announced to speak, and yet the speech does not begin until line 1700. I do not say this is good form, I am not concerned to uphold it;—but I do believe it to be naturally incident to the genuine and unsophisticated Epic; and that the critic, who attributes it to the later botching of the literary poetaster, is on the wrong track.

Another example from the text of our poem. Let any one open at about line 2500, and read a few lines there, where Beowulf recalls his single combat with Dæghrefn; it is very inconsecutive, he is vaunting the good service his sword has done him first and last, and seems about to give an instance; when lo! it is no sword-play the feat that follows, but only handgrips. This is certainly less logical than the work of an eighteenth century poet; but I find it quite natural. I quote this instance as one that I think cannot be explained by the two-handed theory:—disjointed as it is to our logical minds, it nevertheless hangs together too well for us to call it patch-work. It is merely 'rambling,' that is the right word for it.

Heinzel has pointed out that the incongruities of the



epic style are something inherent. In l. 65 it seems as if Hrothgar had succeeded to the throne next after Healfdene; but in 467 and 2158 we see that his immediate predecessor was Heorogar. In 1532 Beowulf flung away Unferth's sword Hrunting in a rage at its failure, and supplied himself with another sword which he found on the spot, a sword which served his turn and which (at least the hilt of it) is carried to court as a trophy. Yet in 1807 he restores Hrunting to Unferth, with a noble reticence, besides words of praise. Not a hint of how he could still have that sword in his possession<sup>1</sup>.

Ten Brink's idea is that the Angles who colonized Bernicia and Deira in the sixth century, had brought with them from the continent the tale of Beowulf, and that the Bernicians developed it into a romance of which the Swimming-match and the Dragon Story were the main elements. But in Deira the story took rather a different shape:—in this country it was the voyage to Heorot and the tussle with Grendel that exercised the skill of the minstrel.

After Northumbria became Christian, and the expansion of the *Epopœa* was thereby checked in the North, the Mercians, who were still heathen, took their turn to work at its development, and it is to this stage of the poem's evolution that we are to assign the sub-lacustrine adventure and the duel with the troll-wife. This too is the epoch when the episodes were inserted, and the romance acquired its Danish colouring.

In the eighth century came the poet who wove the various adventures into one poetic web. The poem so formed bears traces of the diversity of shape under which the story had previously circulated.

<sup>1</sup> *Anzeiger für Deutsches Alterthum*, New Series, X. 224.

Hence the numerous discrepancies, incongruities, contradictions.

Its next hap was to fall into the hand of a theologian, who supplied the doctrinal touches. At length in the ninth century it was brought in this composite form to the kingdom of Kent, and it was from a copy in the Kentish dialect that the West-Saxons took the version which got written in the second half of the tenth century in the manuscript now preserved in the Cotton Library.

It is a remarkable example of the force of a literary tradition, how the Germans have transferred to the *Beowulf* that passion for discovering the sutures of poetic workmanship which they have excited among themselves through generations of competitive theorizing about Homer. The enthusiasm which they display in this field, is the outcome of a habit which has been cultivated by a long tradition of rivalries on that inexhaustible theme. In no other way can it reasonably be accounted for, as the pleasure which they find in it can hardly be called natural. So long as one is a stranger to this acquired taste it seems rather perverse to be for ever scanning the wrong side of the tapestry, or breaking up the musical toy to look for the secret of the music.

There is another line of research which must be carefully distinguished from the *Innere Geschichte* enquiry. I mean the enquiry into the mythic tradition. The great distinction is that this investigation is of a historical nature—whereas *that* is almost wholly visionary or speculative. One of its most zealous votaries, Ten Brink, declared that there was no way of conducting the *Innere Geschichte* enquiry but by circular



reasoning. And yet he thought it worth while to write hundreds of pages under such conditions! But the tracing the mythology is a solid investigation, it is a sound literary and historical enquiry; it was the line upon which Kemble set out, and it has been fruitfully pursued by Müllenhoff and Bugge.

The criticism of the text shows no signs of being exhausted. It still progresses in the Danish and German periodicals, where new and almost convincing emendations appear at times, from Rieger, Bugge, Sievers, and other critics. But all are agreed in recognizing the work of Grein as the broad basis of the whole study, even while they have in many instances improved upon his renderings<sup>1</sup>.

## II. THE CONTENTS OF THE POEM.

### *The First Part.*

THE Prologue begins with Scyld, who was picked up as a foundling, in a boat with a sheaf of corn. He founded the Danish dynasty of the Scyldings. His son is Beowulf Scyldinga.

<sup>1</sup> Reiger (Zacher's Zeitschrift, iii. 381) said of Grein in 1871 what Bugge in the same serial (iv. 192) repeated in 1873, as follows: 'So oft ich Grein entgegenzutreten veranlasst war, bin ich mir doch immer von neuem bewusst geworden, wie viel wir ihm verdanken, da es erst auf der breiten und sichern Grundlage seines Glossars möglich geworden ist, Fragen der Kritik und Exegese erspriesslich zu verhandlen.' This is the more interesting from the circumstance that both Rieger and Bugge have represented a sort of reaction against Grein's extreme conservatism in dealing with the text.

As I shall want to make evidential use of the lines 12-25, I here exhibit them in the original :—

þæm eafera wæs  
 æfter cenned  
 geong in geardum,  
 þone god sende  
 folce to frófre.  
 Fyren þearfe ongeat,  
 þæt hi ær drugon  
 aldor léase  
 lange hwile.  
 Him þæs lif fréa,  
 wuldres wealdend,  
 worold áre forgeaf.  
 Béowulf wæs bréme,  
 bláð wide sprang  
 Scyldes eaferan,  
 Scede landum in.  
 Swá sceal gúðfruma  
 góde gewyrcean  
 fromum feoh giftum  
 on fæder feorme,  
 þæt hine on ylde  
 eft gewunigen  
 wil gesiðas,  
 þonne wíg cume,  
 léode gelæsten.  
 Lof dædum sceal  
 in mægða gehwære  
 man geþéon.

To him was a child,  
 inheritor born,  
 young son in the Court,  
 whom God did send  
 for the nation's relief.  
 Hard luck he well knew  
 they had erewhile endured,  
 when kingless they were  
 a long time together.  
 So the life-giving Lord,  
 the dispenser of glory,  
 did prosperity grant.  
 Beowulf was breme<sup>1</sup>  
 wide ran the bruit  
 of the Scylding child  
 in Scandic lands.  
 A chieftain should so  
 with opulence work,  
 with bounteous gifts,  
 in his father's time,  
 that in years mature  
 he may find men attached,  
 willing companions ;—  
 so that, come war,  
 Leeds may be at command.  
 'Tis by meriting praise  
 (every people among)  
 that men grow into power.

This Beowulf is not the hero of our poem ; the hero is Beowulf Geata. When Scyld died, his corpse was shipped off to sea, whence he had come.

I. The son of the Scylding Beowulf was Healfdene, and he was father of Hrothgar, who had good fortune in war, enlarged his realm, and ruled over many nations with imperial sway. It came into his mind to add to

<sup>1</sup> See the *New English Dictionary*, v. Breme.



his Burg a spacious hall for the greater splendour of his hospitality and the dispensing of his bounty. The hall was built, and he named it Heorot. Here he had at first a happy time, and he enriched his people by his liberality. II. But his hopes were ruined by the nightly visits of a devouring fiend; the hall, though habitable by day, was abandoned at night; the king's people were either killed or they had retired to safer quarters; no faithful band kept watch round the seat of Danish royalty; the aged king was in dejection and despair.

There was, however, one thing that the oaf could not invade, and that was the throne of state:—

168 No he ðone gif stol  
gretan moste,  
maððum for metode,  
ne his myne wisse.

Yet he the royal seat  
might never reach;  
Sacred thing reserved of God  
from his insensate touch.

III. In the neighbouring land of the Goths ruled a young king whose name was Hygelac, and he had about him a nephew, a youth who had the strength of thirty men. The story of Hrothgar's trouble reached this youngster's ears, and he resolved to help him. He sailed with fourteen companions, and reached the Danish coast. The band was challenged by the coast-warden, and Beowulf was spokesman for the party. IV. The warden being satisfied, directed them inland to the royal burg. Beowulf's company stood before Hrothgar's gate. V. Asked the meaning of this armed visit, he answered, 'We sit at Hygelac's table; my name is Beowulf. I will tell mine errand to thy master if he will deign that we may greet him.' VI. Hrothgar knew Beowulf's name, remembered his father Ecgtheow, had the visitor to his presence, heard his high resolve, was ready to hope for deliverance, and prompt to see in Beowulf a deliverer. VII, VIII. In the course of the fes-

tivity of his reception, the king's loreman, whose name was Unferth, gibes at Beowulf about a rash swimming match which had nearly cost him his life, and this attack affords Beowulf occasion to tell how he swam for days together in a stormy sea and slew sea-monsters. IX. This was not merely an idle feat, he had made the sea safer for mariners. He flouts Unferth, and vows to watch for Grendel, and let them know what stuff is in a Goth. The old king is gladdened, harmony is restored, and there follow some pleasing details of social amenities.

There was laughter, and music, and song. Then came the ceremony of the Hall-cup, with which the queen honoured the present occasion ;—she being mistress of high ceremonial. Here we get a glimpse of the disposition of the Hall, as the queen goes the round of seniors and juniors, and among these latter she hands the cup to Beowulf, with a gracious and touching speech, by which the youth's enthusiasm is exalted to the highest pitch. His adventure is reiterated with a vaunt shaped like a vow : he solemnly declares that he will rid them of the scourge or die in the Hall. His brag (eminently becoming, it should be remembered, in an epical hero) pleased the queen :—

640 *Ńám wífe ǵá word  
wel lícodon,  
gilp cwide Géates ;  
éode gold hroden  
fréolicu folc cwén  
tó hire fréan sittan.*

To that woman those words  
well-liking appeared,  
glorious vaunt of the Goth ;  
she went gold-arrayed,  
noble lady and queen,  
to sit down by her lord.

But night comes on, and with it the fears that are now habitual. Boding thoughts haunt men's minds, the guests depart, and the king, retiring to his bower, commits to his visitor the night-watch of Heorot, in solemn terms :—



655. Næfre ic ænegum men  
 ær âlyfde,  
 siððan ic hond and rond  
 hebban mihte,  
 ðrýð ærn Dena :—  
 būton ðē nū ðā !  
 Hafa nū and geheald  
 hūsa sēlest ;  
 gemyne mærcō,  
 mægen ellen cýð;  
 waca wið wrāčum !  
 ne bið ðē wilna gād.  
 gif ðū čæt ellen weorc  
 aldre gedigest.

Never I to any man  
 ere now entrusted,  
 (since hand and shield  
 I first could heave)  
 the Guardhouse of the Danes :—  
 never but now to thee !  
 Have now and hold  
 the sacred house ;  
 of glory mindful  
 main and valour prove ;  
 watch for the foe !  
 no wish of thine shall fail,  
 if thou the daring work  
 with life canst do.

X. Beowulf and his companions have their beds in the hall. He puts off his armour, and declares that as Grendel fights without weapons, so will he.

His companions sleep ; but he watches. XI. Grendel comes prowling over the moor towards his old familiar hunting ground. It was not long before the depredator of the night was there, and a lurid gleam stood out of his eyes. While Beowulf cautiously held himself on the alert, the fiend had quickly clutched and devoured one of the sleepers. But now the demon found himself in a grasp unknown before. Long and dire was the strife. The timbers cracked, the iron-bound benches plied, and work deemed proof against all but fire was now a wreck. Grendel finding the foe too strong, thought only of escape. XII. He did escape, and got away to the moor, but he left an arm in Beowulf's grip, which was set up as a trophy.

XIII. Early in the morning men came from far and near to see the hideous trophy on the gable of the hall : men came to rejoice in the great deliverance ; for Heorot, they said, was now purged. Great was their joy. A party of horsemen rode over the moor, tracking Grendel's retreat by his blood ; they followed his path

to the dismal pool where he had his habitation ; then they turn their route homewards, riding together and conversing as they go. They talk of Beowulf, they liken him with Sigemund, that hero of greatest name. When they come to galloping ground, they break away from the tales, and race over the turf. Then they fall back into talking again, and now the subject is Here-mod ; but he was proud and cold, not like Beowulf, who is as genial as he is valiant. The early riders are back to Heorot in time to see the king and the queen moving from bower to hall, the king with his guard, the queen with her ladies. XIV. Then follows a noble scene. Hrothgar now sees the hideous trophy on the gable ; he takes his stand on the Staple, and utters a thanksgiving to God as stately as it is simple. He reviews the woe and the grief, the disgrace, the helplessness, and the utter despondency of himself and of his people ; ‘and now a boy hath done the deed which we all with our united powers could not compass ! Verily that woman is blessed that bare him ; and if she yet lives, she may well say that God was very gracious to her in her child-bearing. Beowulf, I will love thee as a son, and thou shalt lack nothing that it is in my power to give.’

Beowulf answered : ‘We did our best in a risky tussle ; would I could have brought you the fiend a captive. I could not hold him ; he gave me the slip : but he left a limb behind ; *that* will be his death.’ XV. Next Heorot is restored and beautified anew. Marvellous gold-embroidered hangings drape the walls, the admiration of those who have an eye for such things. The whole interior had been a wreck, the roof alone remained entire. Now, it was straight and fair once more ; and now it was to be the scene of such a profusion of gifts as poet had never sung.



In honour of his victory Beowulf received a golden banner of quaint device, a helmet, and a coat of mail ; but what drew all eyes was the ancient famous sword now brought forth from the Treasury, and borne up to the hero. Furthermore, at the king's word, eight splendid horses, with gilt cheek-plates, were led into the hall ; and on one of them was seen the saddle, the well-known saddle of Hrothgar, wherein he, never aloof in battle-hour, sate when he mingled in the fray of war. 'Take them,' said the king, 'take them, Beowulf, both horses and armour ; and my blessing with them.'

XVI. The companions of Beowulf were not forgotten : they all received appropriate gifts. The slain man is not forgotten ; compensation is ordained for him in gold : and a decent space is given to suitable reflections.

The festivities proceed, and we have a picture of the course of the banquet. The minstrel's tale on that occasion was the Fearful Fray in the Castle of Finn, when Danes were there on a visit. XVII. The Lay being ended, Wealhtheow the queen bears the cup to the king, and bids him be merry and bountiful. Her queenly counsel stops not here. The king had sons of his own ; he should give no hint of any other succession to his seat ; while he occupied the throne, he should be large in bounty and encircle himself with grateful champions, but leave the realm to his children.

XVIII. Next, with like ceremony she honours Beowulf, and hands the cup to him. She also presents her own special gifts to the deliverer :—bracelets, and a rich garment, and a collar surpassing all most famed in story since Hama captured the collar of the Brisings. The queen addresses Beowulf, wishes him joy of her gifts, exalts his merits, bids him befriend her son and be loyal to the king. She took her seat, and the revelry grew.

Little deemed they, what next would happen, when the night should be dark, and Hrothgar asleep in his bower !

The hall is made ready as a dormitory for the men-at-arms ; the benches are slewed round, and the floor is spread from end to end with beds and bolsters. Every warrior's shield is set upright at his head, and by the bench-post stands his spear, supporting helmet and mail. Such was their custom ; they slept as men always ready to rise and do service to their king.

### *The Second Part.*

XIX. Horror is renewed in the night ; Grendel's fiendish dam visits the hall and kills one of the sleepers, Æschere by name. In the morning the king is in utter consternation. He sends for Beowulf, who, after the purging of Heorot, had occupied a separate bower, like the king. Beowulf arrives, and hopes all is well.

XX. Hrothgar spake :—‘ Ask not of welfare ;—sorrow is renewed for the Danish folk ! Æschere my trusty friend is dead ; my comrade tried in battle when the tug was for life, when the fight was foot to foot and helmets clashed :—oh ! Æschere was what athane should be ! The cruel hag has wreaked on him her vengeance.

The country folk said there were two of them, one the semblance of a woman, the other the spectre of a man. Their haunt is in the remote land, in the crags of the wolf, the wind-beaten cliffs, and untrodden bogs, where the dismal stream plunges into the drear abyss of an awful lake, overhung with a dark and grisly wood gnarled down to the water's edge, where a lurid flame plays nightly on the surface of the flood—and there



lives not the man who knows its depth ! So dreadful is the place that the hunted stag, hard driven by the hounds, will rather die on the bank than find a shelter there. A place of terror ! When the wind rises, the waves mingle hurly-burly with the clouds, the air is stifling and rumbles with thunder. To thee alone we look for relief ; darest thou explore the monster's lair, I will reward the adventure with ancient treasures, with coils of gold if thou return alive !'

XXI. Said Beowulf, the son of Ecgtheow :—' Sorrow not, experienced sire ! Better avenge a friend than excessively deplore him :—each must wait the end of life, and should work while he may to make him a name—the best thing after life ! Bestir thee, guardian of the folk ! let us be quick upon the track of Grendel's house-mate. I make thee a promise :—not highest cliff, not widest field, not darkest wood, nor deepest flood—go where he will—shall be his refuge ! Bear up for one day, and may thy troubles end according to my wish !' The king mounts, and with his retinue conducts Beowulf to the charmèd lake : the wildness of the way, and the strange nature of the scenes, are all in keeping. The armed followers sit them down in a place where they command a view of the dismal water. Monstrous creatures writhe about the crags ; one of them is hit and landed.

Beowulf equips for the adventure. His armour is described. His sword was the famous Hrunting, lent him (strange to tell) by Unferth, the envious orator, who had gibed at Beowulf on the day of his arrival. It was a sword of high repute ; a hoarded treasure ; its edge was iron ; it was damascened with device of coiled twigs ; it had never failed in fight the hand that dared to wield it. Unferth was no match for it, but Beowulf

was. In the description of this sword there occurs a word of special mark. Nowhere else in Anglo-Saxon literature do we meet with the compound *hæft-méce*<sup>1</sup>.

1455 Næs ðæt ðonne mætost  
       mægen fultuma  
 ðæt him on ðearfe lāh  
       ðyle Hrōðgāres;  
 wæs ðæm hæft méce  
       Hrunting nama,  
 ðæt wæs ān foran  
       eald gestrēona;  
 ecg wæs īren  
       āter tanum fāh,  
 āhyrded heaðo swāte;  
       næfre hit æt hilde ne  
       swāc  
 manna ængum  
       ðāra ðe hit mid mun-  
       dum bewand  
 sē ðe gryre sīðas  
       gegān dorste  
 folc stede fāra;  
       næs ðæt forma sīð  
 ðæt hit ellen weorc  
       æfnan scolde.

Nor was that the meanest  
       of aids to his might,  
 which was lent him at need  
       by the lore-man of Hrothgar;  
 'twas a rare-hafted blade  
       Hrunting by name,  
 ranking foremost among  
       the fabrics of eld;  
 the edge it was iron  
       inlaid with device,  
 in war-blood made hard;  
       never once had it failed

any man of all those  
       in whose hands it had  
       flashed,  
 who in dreadful encounter  
       had dared to engage  
 the full force of the foe:—  
       this was not the first time  
 that it work of high fame  
       had been called to fulfil.

XXII. Now Beowulf spoke, ready for action: 'Remember, noble Hrothgar, how thou and I talked together, that if I lost life in thy service thou wouldest be as a father to me departed:—protect my comrades if I am taken; and the gifts thou gavest me, beloved Hrothgar, send home to Hygelac. When he looks on the treasures he will know that I found a bounteous master, and enjoyed life while it lasted. And let Unferth have the curious old sword: I will conquer

<sup>1</sup> In the corresponding Icelandic narrative (Saga of Grettir) there occurs the word *hepti-séx*, which is completely analogous with the Anglo-Saxon *hæft-méce*, and has in its own dialect a strangeness of the same kind. It was Dr. Gudbrand Vigfusson who first called attention to this remarkable piece of evidence.



fame with Hrunting, or die fighting.' Act followed word : he had plunged, and the wave had covered him. It took much of the day before he reached the depths of the abyss. While yet on the downward way, he was met by the old water-wolf that had dwelt there a hundred years, and had perceived the approach of a human visitor. She clutched him and bore him off, till he found himself with his enemy in a vast chamber which excluded the water and was lighted by some strange fire-glow. At once the fight began, and Hrunting rang about the demon's head ; but against such a being the sword was useless, the edge turned that never had failed before : he flung it from him and trusted to strength of arm. In his rage he charged so deadly that he felled the monster to the ground ; but she recovered and Beowulf fell. And now the furious wight thought to avenge Grendel ; she struck her knife at Beowulf's breast, and his life had ended there but for the good service of his ringed mail-sark. Protected by this armour, and helped by Him who giveth victory, he passed the perilous moment, and was on his feet again.

XXIII. And now he espied among the armour in that place an old elfin sword, such as no other man might wield ; this he seized, and with the force of despair he so smote that the fell hag lay dead :—the sword was gory, and the boy was fain of his work. With rage unsated, he ranged through the place till he came to where Grendel lay lifeless : from the hateful carcass he smote the head.

To Hrothgar's men watching on the height the lake appeared as if mingled with blood, and this seemed to confirm their fears. The day was waning : the old men about Hrothgar took counsel, and, concluding they should see Beowulf no more, they moved homeward.

But Beowulf's followers, though sick at heart and with little hope, yet sate on in spite of dejection.

1600	þá cóm nón dæges.	'Twas now the day's ninth hour.
	Næs of géafon	From the Ness retired
	hwate Scyldingas ;	the forceful Scyldings ;
	gewát him hám þonon	he took his homeward way,
	gold wine gumena.	the gold-dispenser.
	Gistas sétan,	The strangers sate,
	módes séoce,	heart-sick the while,
	ond on mere stædon ;	and on the mere they gazed ;
	wiston ond ne wendon,	they wished but weened not,
	þæt hie heora wine	that they their captain
	drihten	
	selfne gesáwon.	alive should see.

Meanwhile the huge, gigantic blade had melted marvellously away 'likest unto ice, when the Father (he who hath power over times and seasons, that is, the true ruler) looseneth the chain of frost and unwindeth the wave-ropes':—so venomous was the gore of the fiend that had been slain therewith. Beowulf took the gigantic hilt and the monster's head, and, soaring up through the waters, he stood on the shore to the surprise and joy of his faithful comrades, who came eagerly about him to ease him of his dripping harness. Exulting they return to Heorot, Grendel's head carried by four men on a pole ; they march straight up the hall to greet the king, and the guests are startled with the ghastly evidence of Beowulf's success.

XXIV. He tells the story and presents the hilt to Hrothgar. The aged king extols the unparalleled achievements of Beowulf, and then (XXV.) after the first burst of praise, his mind reverts, as befits age and a father-like care, to a fear and dread lest such super-human achievement should generate elation of mind and provoke Nemesis. This long address of the old king to the young hero has been too hastily slighted as mere



sermonizing, whereas it is appropriate and affecting; and moreover it affords valuable light for the interpretation of the poem. Beginning with a burst of generous praise, the aged king unfolds the danger of arrogance and the example of Heremod, enlarges on reverses of fortune caused by recklessness in prosperity, and on the many ills and accidents to which all men are exposed. Finally, he illustrates his theme by his own case; he, too, had thought that he should never be moved, when Grendel came and changed all his joy to woe, and now he cannot thank God enough that he has lived to see the two monsters dead; and then he closes, as he began, with words of honour renewed to his deliverer. In the course of this speech, after the warning example of Heremod, these lines come:—

1722      Ðú ðé lær be ðon,  
            gum cyste ongit!  
            ic ðis gid be ðé  
            áwræc wintrum fród.

School thou thee by this;  
manhood's goal attain!  
I this tale in thy behoof,  
in old man's wise have told.

These lines start forward from the canvas; the immediate theme hardly justifies them; they sound like the utterance of a personal sentiment, and seem to touch the motive of the poem.

XXVI. Soon after this we have the parting between the old king and the young hero, who declares his readiness to come with a thousand thanes at any time of Hrothgar's need; while Hrothgar's words are of admiration for his valour and confidence in his discretion:—so he lets him go, not without large addition of gifts, and embraces, and kisses, and tears. 'Thence Beowulf the warrior, elate with gold, trod the grassy plain, exulting in treasure; the sea-goer that rode at anchor awaited its lord; then as they went was Hrothgar's liberality often praised.'

XXVII. At the shore they are met by the coast-warden with an altered and now respectful mien: they are soon afloat, and we hear the music of the wind in the tackle as the gallant craft bears away before the breeze to carry them all merrily homewards after well-spiced adventure. Between the landing in his own country and his arrival at court there is an episode (as it were talk or reflections by the way) of great significance.

1925 Bold wæs betlic  
       brego róf cyning,  
 hea on healle ;  
       Hygd swiðe geong  
 wis, wel þungen,  
       þeah þe wintra lýt  
 under burh locan  
       gebiden hæbbe  
 Hæreðes dohtor :  
       næs hio hnáh swá þeah  
 né to gnéað gifa  
       Géata léodum,  
 máðm gestréona.

The mansion was magnificent,  
       majestic the king,  
 high-seated in hall ;  
       Hygd quite young,  
 wise and accomplished ;  
       though winters but few  
 in the courts of the castle  
       she have counted as yet,  
 the daughter of Hæreth :—  
       she was not too shy though,  
 nor grudging of gifts  
       to the Gothic leeds  
 from the royal stores.

Thrytho was very different, she was haughty and revengeful, insomuch that it was hardly safe for a man to look at her. But after she became Offa's wife, she grew gentler, and proved a worthy queen for the best of kings.

1954 hield héah lufan  
       wið hæleða brego,  
 calles mon cynnes  
       mine gefræge  
 þone sélestan  
       bí sáem twéonum  
 eormen cynnes ;  
       forþam Offa wæs  
 geofum ond gūðum,  
       gár céne man,  
 wide geweorþod ;  
       wisdóme héold

high love she held  
       with the prince of heroes,  
 who of all men was,  
       as minstrels tell,  
 the very best  
       the seas between  
 the wide world over ;  
       for Offa was  
 in court and camp  
       (the keen gallant)  
 renowned wide ;  
       he wisely ruled



éðel sinne,  
þonon Eomær wóc  
hæleðum to helpe.

his own domain ;  
whence Eomær sprang  
mankind to help.

XXVIII—XXXI. The welcome is worthy of the work :—Hygelac's reception of Beowulf, the joy of getting him back ; Beowulf presenting to his liege lord the wealth he had won ; old reminiscences called up and couched in song ; an ancient sword brought out and presented to Beowulf, and with the sword a spacious lordship, a noble mansion, and seigneurial rights.

And so he dwelt until such time as he went forth with Hygelac on his fatal expedition against the Frisians, who were backed by a strong alliance of Chauci, and Chattuarii, and Franks ; and there Hygelac fell, and his army perished. Beowulf, by prodigious swimming, reached his home again, where now was a young widowed queen and her infant son. She proffered the kingdom to Beowulf ; he preferred the office of the faithful guardian. At a later time the young king fell in battle, and then Beowulf succeeded. He reigned fifty years a good king, and ended life with a supreme act of heroism.

### *The Third Part.*

XXXII. After so long a period of tranquillity, there came a pest in the shape of a fiery dragon, which was provoked to hostilities by the violation of his treasure-hoard. At night the fiery monster went forth spreading destruction over all the country. This ancient hoard had originated in the accumulated wealth of a band of men, and at length it had come to be the property of the last survivor, who found a barrow on the down over the

sea, and there the solitary man committed his treasures to the earth, and at length died.

It is heathen gold, and it was discovered by the flying dragon, who took possession of it, and he had guarded it now for three hundred years. Such was the hoard that was invaded by a fugitive who had escaped from an angry master. He carried off a tankard and presented it for a peace-offering to his lord. This happened while the Dragon slept; when he woke, he perceived the theft, and not finding the culprit, he resolved to be revenged by desolating fire.

XXXIII—XXXV. He filled the land with conflagration, and it soon came to the capital seat of the realm.

2324 þá wæs Biowulfe	To Beowulf then
bróga gecýðed	bitter message was brought
snúde tó sóðe,	swift and sooth,
þæt his sylfes hám,	that his stately mansion,
bolda sélest,	best of buildings,
bryne wylmum mealt,	was burnt to ashes,
gif stól Géata.	grand seat of the Goths.
þæt þám góðan wæs	That did the good king's
hréow on hreðre,	soul exasperate
hyge sorga máest :	with sorrow immense ;
wénde se wisa	he weened, wise as he was,
þæt hē wealdende,	against the All-wielding
ofer calde riht,	(old faith cast away)
éccan dryhtne	against the Eternal,
bitre gebulge :	bitter outrage to hurl :
bréost innan wéoll	his breast in him surged
þeostrum geþoncum	with imaginings weird
swá him geþýwene	unwonted with him.
wæs.	

Here again, as in the case of Grendel, for some reason which is dimly apprehended, Beowulf resolves to face the monster with his own single-handed strength. He had passed through so many contests unharmed, and why should he be staggered now? Then follows a long digression, what great things he had done in the past.



He had been with Hygelac in the battle where he fell on the Frisian shore ; he had got home by prodigious swimming ; he had declined the Gothic crown, he would not supersede the infant prince, but preferred to act as his guardian and tutor.

In process of time Heardred came to man's estate and took full possession of his realm. He was slain by a fugitive prince from Sweden whom he had hospitably entertained ; and so Beowulf came to the throne of the Goths. But he did not fail to avenge the death of Heardred ; he marched into Sweden with his forces and slew the slayer. Thus had Beowulf overcome every danger, and discharged every duty.

He now goes forth with a small band of twelve chosen men, to reconnoitre the dragon's lair. The lonely dome of an earthen hill comes in view, it is on the verge of the wild headland, over the breakers of the sea. In that hill the dragon kept his hoard. The king sits on the foreland, with boding soul that his end was nigh. Here Beowulf after long intermission becomes the speaker, and reviews his early life from childhood down to where the last digression had begun, viz. to Hygelac's ill-starred expedition, where we now learn the new fact that Beowulf had engaged Dæghrefn in single combat unarmed, and had slain him. But now, he adds, in the coming contest, I must use weapons. He regrets the necessity as if it detracted from the heroism of the adventure ; only then the fiery blast is not to be faced without shield and byrnie. He bids his companions stand on the mountain in their armour and await the issue. The fight began and Beowulf was in sore distress. His followers retreated to the wood in panic terror.

XXXVI, XXXVII. He fought and slew the dragon,

but was himself mortally wounded in the conflict. One single follower, Wiglaf by name, bolder and more faithful than the rest, was at his side in danger, though not able to save him ; and he received the hero's dying words :—‘ I should have given my armour to my son if I had heir of my body. I have held this people fifty years ; no neighbour has dared to challenge or molest me. I have lived with men on fair and equal terms ; I have done no violence, caused no friends to perish, and that is a comfort to one deadly wounded who is soon to appear before the Ruler of men. Now, beloved Wiglaf, go thou quickly in under the hoary stone of the dragon's vault, and bring the treasures out into the daylight, that I may behold the splendour of ancient wealth, and death may be the softer for the sight.’

XXXVIII. When it was done, and the wondrous heap was before his eyes, the victorious warrior spake :—‘ For the riches on which I look I thank the Lord of all, the king of glory, the everlasting Ruler, that I have been able before my death-day to acquire this for my people. Well spent is the remnant of my life to earn such a treasure ; I charge thee with the care of the people ; I can be no longer here. Order my warriors, after the bale-fire, to rear a mighty mound on the headland over the sea : it shall tower aloft on Hronesness for a memorial to my people : that sea-going men in time to come may call it Beowulf's Barrow, when foam-prowed ships drive over the scowling flood on their distant courses.’ Then he removed a golden coil from his neck and gave it to the young thane ; the same he did with his helmet inlaid with gold, the coronet, and the mail-coat : he bade him use them as his own.

‘ Thou art the last of our race of the Wægmundings : fate has swept all my kindred off into Eternity ; I must



follow them.' That was his latest word ; his soul went out of his breast into the lot of the just.

XXXIX. Wiglaf upbraids the companions who had stood aloof from their lord in the hour of his need. He pronounces upon them a sentence of degradation and disgrace which is to extend to all their kindred.

XL, XLI. An envoy is sent to announce the fatal tidings to the troop in the camp on the hill. He tells them that Beowulf is dead and Wiglaf keeping guard over the corpse of his master.

The nameless envoy enlarges on the situation of affairs and the prospect of invasion from neighbours who will now be emboldened to revenge past humiliations. He reminds them of the old grudges of the Franks and Frisians on the one side, and of the Swedes on the other. And he concludes with a peroration charged with dismal apprehensions for the future.

2999 Ðæt is sío fæhðo  
                   and se fēondscipe,  
 wæl nīð wera,  
                   ðæs ðe ic wēn hafo,  
 ðē ūs sēceað tō  
                   Swēona lēode  
 syððan hīe gefricgeað  
                   fréan ūserne,  
 ealdorléasne  
                   ðone ðe ær gehēold  
 wið hettendum  
                   hord and rīce;  
 folc ræd fremede,  
                   oððe furður gēn  
 eorlscipe efnde.  
                   Nū is ofost betost  
 ðæt wē ðēod cyning  
                   ðær scēawian  
 and ðone gebringan,  
                   ðē ūs bēagas geaf,  
 on ād fære.

That is the feud  
                   and foeman's hate  
 the vengeful spite  
                   that I expect  
 against us now will bring  
                   the Swedish bands ;  
 soon as they hear  
                   our chieftain high  
 of life bereft—  
                   who held till now  
 'gainst haters all  
                   the hoard and realm ;  
 peace framed at home ;  
                   and further off  
 respect inspired.  
                   Now speed is best  
 that we our liege and king  
                   go look upon,  
 and him escort,  
                   who us adorned,  
 the pile towards.

Ne scel ānes hwæt  
 meltan mid ðām mōdigan,  
     ac ðær is mādma hord,  
 gold unrime  
     grimme gecéapod  
 ond nú æt síðestan  
     sylfes féore  
 bēagas gebohte.  
     Ðā sceal brond fretan  
 æled ðeccean,  
     nalles eorl wegan  
 mādðum tō gemyndum,  
     nē mægð scýne  
 habban on healse  
     hring weorðunge,  
 ac sceal géomor mōd  
     golde berēafod  
 oft nalles æne  
     el land tredan;  
 nū se here wisa  
     hleahor ālegde,  
 gamen and gléo drēam.

Not things of petty worth  
 shall with the mighty melt,  
     but there a treasure main,  
 uncounted gold  
     costly procured  
 and now at length  
     with his great life  
 jewels dear-bought;  
     them shall flame devour,  
 burning shall bury:—  
     never a warrior bear  
 jewel of dear memory,  
     nor maiden sheen  
 have on her neck  
     ring-decoration;  
 nay, shall disconsolate  
     gold-unadorned  
 not once but oft  
     tread strangers' land;  
 now the leader in war  
     laughter hath quenched  
 game and all sound of glee.

The troop visits the scene of the fatal conflict, and there they see the king lying dead upon the same field with the scorched carcass of the Dragon.

XLII. Preparations are made for the bale-fire, and the accumulated treasures are brought forth out of the cavern to go to enrich the conflagration. The Dragon's carcass is toppled over the cliff into the sea.

XLIII. And so this noble poem moves on to its close, ending, like the Iliad, with a great bale-fire, 3157-3183.

Geworhton ðā  
     Wedra lēode  
 hlāw on hliðe,  
     sē wæs hēah ond brād,  
 wæg líðendum  
     wīde gesýne;  
 ond betimbredon

Wrought then  
     the Weder-lieges  
 a heap on the cliff  
     —it was high and broad—  
 to sailors o'er the sea  
     widely seen;  
 in building they toiled



on tȳn dagum  
 beadu rôfes bēcn,  
 bronda be lāfe;  
 wealle beworhton,  
 swā hit weorðlicost  
 fore snotre men  
 findan mihton.  
 Hī on beorg dydon  
 bēg ond siglu,  
 forlēton eorla gestrēon  
 eorðan healdan.  
 Ða ymbe hlāw riodan  
 hilde dēore,  
 æðelinga bearn,  
 ealra twelfa:  
 woldon fela cwīðan,  
 kyning mǣnan,  
 word gyd wrecan  
 and ymb wer sprecan.  
 Eahtodan eorlscipe  
 and his ellen weorc  
 duguðum dēmdon;  
 swā hit gedēfe bið  
 ðæt mon his wine dryhten  
 wordum herge,  
 ferhðum frēoge  
 ðonne hē forð scile  
 of líc haman  
 lænum weorðan.  
 Swa begnornodon  
 Gēata lēode  
 hlāfordes hryre,  
 heorð genēatas;—  
 cwædon ðæt hē wære,  
 woruld cyninga,  
 mannum mildust  
 and mon ðwærust,  
 lēodum līðost,  
 ond lof geornost.

ten days long  
 a beacon heroic,  
 where the burning had been;  
 they begirt it with wall  
 in worthiest wise  
 that men of high cunning  
 with craft could devise.  
 In the barrow they buried  
 bright jewels and gems;  
 lordly treasure they left  
 the low earth to hold.  
 Then round the heap about  
 rode the men of war,  
 noblemen of birth,  
 and in number twelve:  
 they would raise a cry,  
 they would moan the king,  
 chant him in a dirge,  
 and tell the hero's deeds.  
 His prowess they praised  
 and the proofs of his fame  
 with devotion recounted;  
 as duty requires  
 that a man his liege lord  
 should extol with a lay,  
 with affection's regret,  
 when away he must go  
 from his bodily home  
 to house elsewhere.  
 Lamented thus  
 the loyal Goths  
 their chieftain's fall,  
 hearth-fellows true;—  
 they said that he was,  
 of all kings in the world,  
 mildest to his men  
 and most friendly,  
 to his lieges benignest,  
 and most bent upon glory.

The closing lines record like an epitaph the praise  
 of the dead in superlatives; and that, not as a warrior,

but as a man and a ruler: for it may be translated so as to leave little display of martial fame, namely thus: how that he was towards men the mildest and most affable, towards his Leeds he was most gracious and most yearning for their esteem.

To this explicit account of the contents, I add a brief *résumé*, which I give not in my own words, but in words borrowed, with minor alterations, from the 'Argument' prefixed to the text of the *Beowulf* in Harrison and Sharp's third edition, Boston, 1888<sup>1</sup>. My reason for this course, and also the significance of the italics, will appear in the next section, p. lxxviii.

The poem opens with a compendious pedigree of the Danish kings down to Hrothgar. Hrothgar, elated with prosperity, builds a magnificent hall, which he calls Heorot. In this hall Hrothgar and his retainers live in joy and festivity, until a malignant fiend, called Grendel, jealous of their happiness, carries off Hrothgar's men by night, and devours them in his moorland retreat. These ravages go on for twelve years. *Beowulf, a thane of Hygelac, king of the Goths, hearing of Hrothgar's calamities, sails from Sweden with fourteen warriors to help him. They reach the Danish coast in safety; and, after an animated parley with Hrothgar's coast-guard, who at first takes them for pirates, they are allowed to proceed to the royal hall, where they are well received by Hrothgar. Beowulf is taunted by the envious Unferhth about his swimming-match with Breca. Beowulf gives his account of the affair and silences Unferhth. At night-fall the king departs, leaving Beowulf in charge of the hall. Grendel soon breaks in, seizes and devours one of Beowulf's companions; is attacked by Beowulf, and, after losing an arm, escapes to the fens. The joy of Hrothgar and the Danes, and their festivities, are described. Beowulf and his companions receive splendid gifts. The next night Grendel's mother revenges her son by carrying off Æschere, the friend and councillor of Hrothgar, during the absence of Beowulf. Hrothgar appeals to Beowulf for help, and describes the haunts of Grendel and his mother. They proceed thither; the scenery of the*

<sup>1</sup> The editors refer to 'H. Sweet, in Warton's *History of English Poetry*,' but whether they mean to indicate verbal quotation from Mr. Sweet, or only general guidance, is not apparent.



lake, and the monsters that inhabit it, are described. Beowulf plunges into the water, and attacks Grendel's mother in her dwelling at the bottom of the lake. He at length strikes off her head. He cuts off Grendel's head, and brings it to Hrothgar. *He then takes leave of Hrothgar, sails back to Sweden, and relates his adventures to Hygelac.* Next we have the accession of Beowulf to the throne, *after the fall of Hygelac and his son Heardred.* He rules prosperously for fifty years, till a dragon, brooding over a hidden treasure, begins to ravage the country, and destroys Beowulf's mansion with fire. Beowulf sets out in quest of it with twelve men. Having a presentiment of his approaching end, he pauses and recalls to mind his past life and exploits. He then takes leave of his followers, and advances alone to attack the dragon. He shouts, and the dragon comes forth. The dragon's scaly hide is proof against Beowulf's sword, and he is reduced to great straits. Then Wiglaf, one of his followers, advances to help him. Wiglaf's shield is consumed by the dragon's fiery breath, and he is compelled to seek shelter under Beowulf's shield of iron. Beowulf's sword snaps asunder, and he is seized by the dragon. Wiglaf stabs the dragon from underneath, and Beowulf cuts it in two with his dagger. Feeling that his end is near, he bids Wiglaf bring out the treasures from the cavern, that he may see them before he dies. Wiglaf enters the dragon's den, which is described, returns to Beowulf, and receives his last commands. Beowulf dies, and Wiglaf bitterly reproaches his companions for their cowardice. The disastrous consequences of Beowulf's death are then foretold, and the poem ends with his funeral.

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### III. MY THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE BEOWULF.

#### 1. *Monitory passages.*

I will begin with that which first seemed to me to promise a clue to the secret history of this poem. There are certain passages which appear to have a monitory character; they do not seem to be moral reflections of a cursory and rhetorical nature, but rather to have a personal direction.

20. So ought a young chief to work, &c.  
 24. Eminence must, in every nation, be attained, &c.  
 1172. So it behoves one to do!  
 1534. So it behoves a man to act, &c.  
 2166. So should a kinsman do!  
 2708. Such should a fellow be!

All these are formulated with the gnomic SCEAL; for which we now say *should* or *ought* or *must*<sup>1</sup>. In all these utterances there is a certain accord and unanimity; they have not a chance aspect at all; they seem to have a concentrated aim. And if so, it seems probable that such an aim would be one with the aim of the poem. Can we in this romantic poem find traces of any person or persons who have a place in history, and such a place too as is required by the nature of our problem?

## 2. *The Mercian Genealogy.*

In the middle of the poem there is a very singular passage (1925–1962) in which the Genealogy of the Mercian kings has been drawn upon to furnish the names of the chief characters. This is the only place in the poem which comes into contact with English historical documents. There are two annals in the Saxon Chronicle where the Mercian dynasty is traced to Woden, one at the accession of Penda in 626, and another at the accession of Offa which is given under 755. These genealogies close with the following names:—Eomær son of Angeltheow, son of Offa, son of Wærmund, son of Wihtlæg, son of Woden.

<sup>1</sup> The moral force of this *shall* is well preserved in the 'Form for Bidding Prayer according to the Pattern given in the 55th Canon.' The current Oxford prints of the so-called 'Bidding Prayer' have this Rubric:—N.B. *Instead of the direction 'Ye shall pray,' the words 'We are to pray' or 'Let us pray,' are often used.*



In *Beowulf* 1925-1962 three of these names occur: namely, Wærmund, Offa, Eomær. Angeltheow is skipped, and Eomær is made Offa's son instead of grandson. This mythic Offa, the third from Woden, is here the subject of eulogy, and the eulogy is of a very remarkable kind. It is not the praise of a warrior, which we know tradition gave to Offa, but it is a sort of praise suited to the conditions of the living Offa and his house. I take this to be not tradition but invention of the poet. It is an indirect encomium or at least an encomiastic reflection upon Offa the reigning sovereign of Mercia.

The link between Offa and Eomær is skipped, and Eomær is made son of Offa, because Eomær is here intended to represent Ecgferth, the son and heir of the living Offa. The admonitions of this poem, indirectly and allegorically conveyed, are intended for the benefit of the ruling family, and more particularly for Ecgferth the heir to the throne. Seven years ago, in letters which I wrote to *THE TIMES*, I ventured to characterize the *Beowulf* as 'The Institution of a Prince.' I am now able to repeat this opinion with greater confidence, and to support it with more circumstantial evidence.

### 3. *Hygelac and his Realm.*

I have said that the description of the mythic Offa is poetic invention. This is an important element in my argument, because where invention appears, we are nearer to the thoughts and cares of the poet and his time, than where he is only a transmitter and embellisher of current traditions. We have now to consider the setting of a vital passage. The scene is no longer the kingdom of Denmark, where the poem opens, but in a totally different region to which we have been transported,

namely the land of the Géatas, the realm of Hygelac. We must investigate Hygelac and his realm.

As far back as 1839, the observation was made by Leo, that this member of the narrative has been inserted by the poet, that he did not find it in the traditional story. To this I will add a further observation, that its insertion was in the nature of a second edition of the poem; that we can see behind the present poem the traces of an earlier framework in which nothing was said of Hygelac and his realm. I shall go still farther and maintain that this king and his dynasty, however they may seem to lean upon history, had no place either in myth or in history, and that it is pure fiction. If I can make these positions good, I think that the signs already indicated of personal and political aims must be admitted to rank as substantial data for the interpretation of the poem. First then, Hygelac has been inserted, not merely into the web of the story, but into the fabric of this very poem, after it had been cast upon a simpler plan<sup>1</sup>.

(a) Even now, it does not constitute an organic part of the poem. It is not entwined with the action in any such a manner as to make it at all difficult to disengage and detach it. The deeds of Beowulf might be told, in all essentials, as they are told in this poem, without any mention of Hygelac or his realm. Indeed, if the story had to be told succinctly, Hygelac would certainly be little noticed, or disappear altogether. In order to exhibit this fact, I wanted a brief *resume* of the tale, and for this end I preferred to adopt that of Messrs. Harrison and Sharp (after Mr. Sweet) rather than to

<sup>1</sup> In the subsequent discussion I shall use 'Hygelac' as a convenient abbreviation to signify Hygelac and his realm and all in which he appears.



make one of my own. (See p. lxxiv.) In that short sketch, the part relating to Hygelac is printed in Italics, to afford the eye a ready measure of the proportion and relation of this element to the whole. In this way I secure independent testimony as to the relation which the part of Hygelac bears to the whole narrative, whether its imbedding is deep or shallow. The attachment is so superficial, and so little necessary to the essentials of the traditional story, that from this view alone we might undertake to pronounce it an insertion. And I think it has been inserted not merely in order to widen the area of the tale, but with the design of opening a free field for what the poet had in his mind to say.

(b) But there is more cogent proof than this. That the tale was at first purely domestic, and that a foreign element has been inserted in it, is betrayed by certain disrupted outstanding ends, which claim a reciprocal affinity. In the preparatory incidents of the story, when Heorot is built, it is said that its solidity is such that it shall never be destroyed but by fire. This has been understood as a mere figure of speech to express a well-compacted fabric, one which violence could not destroy—nothing short of fire. But this will by no means satisfy the text in v. 82, where the expression is not vague but very distinct and pointed: *heaðo wylma bád, laðan liges*: it waited for (i.e. it would stand until—it was reserved for) the destructive flames of hostile fire. This is an Epic prophecy. And it is fulfilled when, in 2324, the mansion of Beowulf is burnt by the fiery gleeds of the dragon. That event in Part III is an event of the first magnitude, a cardinal event, just as the building of Heorot is in Part I. I cannot doubt that the two events corresponded to one another in the original cast of the poem,—the one is an original counter-



part of the other. As the story now runs, Beowulf's burgh is in Gothland, far away from Heorot; but that is only because Gothland and Hygelac have been subsequently inserted by the poet.

(c) The odious behaviour of Unferth is easier to understand if Beowulf was a compatriot than if he really was a foreigner. Jealousy springs not so readily against a stranger as against a neighbour. This scene would therefore be in better keeping if Beowulf were a Dane, than it is now, he being a Goth.

(d) Consider the way in which the queen bespeaks Beowulf's kindness to her son. (See lines 1220 and 1227.) In his present situation, where he is on a brief adventurous visit, it has less propriety; but if he were a native Dane and a member of the royal house who had suddenly proved himself a hero, it would be perfectly natural and appropriate. She would be appealing to a kinsman, who had not been unknown before, but merely known for his agreeable demeanour, and not regarded as a person of commanding importance.

(e) A stronger argument is yet to come. It has always been felt that what makes the most staring incongruity in this poem is the two Beowulfs; the one who figures in the Prologue and who is there in a short space made much of;—the other the hero of the poem who stands in no relation to the former that is manifest or easy to discover. But if Beowulf the hero, instead of being a Goth, were a Dane, the difficulty would vanish. It might still be a pertinent question to ask whether it was a good arrangement to have two different persons of the same name in a poem; but the manifest relation between the two would be such as to afford reasonable ground for their both bearing the same name. That a scion of the Scylding house should be called after the



son of Scyld would appear the most natural thing in the world, and the later Beowulf, being of the same lineage, would simply be the namesake of his own ancestor.

It has been observed by Rönning (p. 111) that: 'As the Prologue now stands we should expect a poetic Saga of the Scyldings, in which the deeds of Danish kings were the staple of the poem, but we are not far in the poem when we find that the centre has shifted and all rotates about a Gothic champion!' The conclusion to which I am led by these appearances is this—that the Prologue belongs not to the poem in its present state, but to the poet's first cast of it, when Denmark was the scene of the whole action.

(f) But there yet remains that which I consider as the crowning evidence of all. In the Third Part there are in a certain passage (2426–2537) two speeches by Beowulf where the nature of the place requires but one. Both speeches are to the same effect and are in fact duplicates; not in their details, but in their relation to the structure of the poem. They are in fact two 'last speeches' before the dragon-fight. They both end in terms which import that they are the speaker's last words before the battle. Both are based upon reminiscences of former exploits, but in one speech the reminiscences are taken from Denmark and Hrothgar and Grendel, in the other they are of Gothland and its royal house to the fall of Hygelac. To me it seems plain that one of these speeches belongs to the first cast of the poem, the other to the extended composition which we have before us. The retention of the old piece in the new plan is a mere blunder on the part of some scribe, who perhaps acted as editor to the whole work. He has left traces of his uneasiness; and there are signs that he has tried to obviate in some measure the awkward-



ness of the arrangement. The elder speech, the one which ought to have been entirely dropped, has been put second as Beowulf's 'last words,' and it has been reduced in length by a partial summarizing of its contents<sup>1</sup>.

Things have not been readjusted, or but very superficially. The poet was not careful to smooth over any little incongruities that might have resulted from the disruptive violence which he had perpetrated upon a well-known story. He had not the forethought to prepare his work to meet the scrutiny of the critic of the future. And yet perhaps he was not entirely negligent of this supplementary duty. Probably there are instances of it which have escaped observation. I will mention one weak place, which may possibly be attributable to this cause.

The sketch given by Hrothgar, 459-472, of Beowulf's father and of his relations with himself, is very like a bit of readjusting patchwork, very shallow, not in the sense that it is bad as poetry or as romance; but shallow in the sense that it is contrived for the nonce, and has no root in the traditionary cycle. That is my impression. It is a piece extemporized to cover the change which the poet had made in regard to the native home and the domestic relations of his hero.

One of the inferences which I draw from the above investigation, and more particularly from the evidence contained in the paragraphs marked *a*, *b*, *e*, *f*; is this—that our poem stands before us in an unfinished state. Whether the work was broken off at the death of the poet, or by his absorption into other occupations; or

<sup>1</sup> One divergence between these two speeches is worth notice. The elder speech ends with an appeal to Wyrð, the new speech omits this heathenish feature.



whether any event happened which terminated his interest in it, is a question beyond our adequate investigation. But (strange to say) here again, as in so many other parts where we have compared our data with the conditions of the supposed time ;—here again, we do find an event which would naturally cause the interest taken in such a work by the poet (being such as I have supposed him) to be abandoned. The death of Ecgferth, after a brief reign, entirely corresponds to the requirements of the hypothesis.

Not that I think our loss has been great. I do not imagine the poet had any considerable improvements in view ; the form before his mind was (I apprehend) that of a Trilogy of Lays, and such is the composition which lies before us—though somewhat in the rough. Nothing in fact remained, but to adjust some transitions, and to remove broken traces incident to the vacillations of the design. And I am not sure that we should have been gainers, if all unsightly edges had been smoothed away ; for, as it is, these imperfections and the insight they afford, are worth more to us than any amount of finish in the workmanship would have been.

4. *The motive of this new invention. Offa,  
Cynethryth, and Ecgferth.*

If we now assume this as established, we may try another step forward and see what further combinations are practicable. If the whole of Hygelac is an insertion of our poet's, this is the part in which his mind will most be present, and in which his originality will enjoy the greatest freedom from traditional restraint. An old story he would take much as he found it, and just reproduce it with force enough to communicate to

it something of new form ; but in such a part even his novelty would be conventional, while his imaginative and creative powers would be quiescent. If he had a design to be inventive, he would choose for that purpose not the old part but the new. If he had any special ideas or lessons to convey, it is in this new part that he would bring them out.

With this in mind, let us observe that in the Hygelac part there occurs a very singular passage in oblique narration (1923-1962), a passage which may be understood either as a solitary reverie, or as a friendly and confidential wayside conversation ;—and it is in this part, curiously and exceptionally constituted, that I find the central revelation of the mind and purpose of the author.

Here it is that those details occur which look very much like an allegory of the house of Offa, the reigning king of Mercia. It forms the climax and the close of that reverie, after which the poet returns, as from a vision, to the progress of the external action. Beowulf is on his homeward journey, and we are caught away from allegory to the scenery of his march. The passage 1923-1962 I take to be in the highest sense original, enshrining the central aim and purpose of the poet.

The bridge by which the poet passes out of the real into the world of reverie is the character of the young queen who makes Hygelac so happy. Here it is important to observe (and this observation is not new) that her name Hygd is an allegorical name, and that her whole character is that of an ideal and abstract virtue ; as much so as the characters in *Pilgrim's Progress*, or in the dramatic works of Joanna Baillie. Hygd is simply Discretion. This Hygd then is held up for a model of womanly and queenly virtue, and she is seem-



ingly foiled to her great advantage by the contrast of Thrytho, who is also an invention of the poet's though brought in like any well-known legendary personage. It seems, I say, at first sight, as if Thrytho were brought in for a foil to the virtues of Hygd, but it turns out very differently. As the transformation scene progresses we discover that Hygd has gone, and that Thrytho alone remains before us. She was not introduced for the sake of Hygd, but vice versâ. Thrytho is the important figure, the one for whose introduction Hygd was but ancillary. Her name, like that of Hygd, is fictitious and allegorical. It means *hauteur*, contemptuous haughtiness, *superbia*, *ὑπερηφάνια*. The name was suggested by that of Cynethryth, Offa's queen. The poet's object is to create an allegorical parallel between the mythic Offa and the reigning king of Mercia. The vindictive character here given to Thrytho is a poetic and veiled admonition addressed to Cynethryth. Offa, that mythic king of good renown, married Thrytho and humanized her character. They had a son, Eomær, says our poem, by a change in the venerable tradition according to which Eomær was the name of Offa's grandson.

On this Eomær we must fasten our attention. He is brought on the stage as a hopeful young prince. He was born *hælepum to helpe* for the help of mankind. This is a honorific characterization which occurs (in this exact form) only once else in the poem, and there it is said by Hrothgar of and to the hero, in the highest moment of enthusiastic eulogy (line 1709). But though not in form elsewhere found, it is again found once in substance, namely in line 14, where it is said of the other Beowulf, the mythic progenitor, how that God sent him *folce to frofre* for the people's comfort. Accordingly we find Eomær is signaled by a honorific

phrase which is used also of the two Beowulfs, once for each of them, and nowhere else. Is there then in the mind of the poet some common bond of sentiment which unifies three of his characters, namely Beowulf Scyldinga, Béowulf Géata, and Eomær; and do they all alike point to Ecgferth?

### 5. *The Date of the Poem.*

Upon the date of this poem the most widely divergent opinions have been formed. It has been too conclusively assumed that there is nothing in the contents to afford us a note of time. The opinion, which has been most frequently repeated (Wright, Sweet, Simrock), is one that makes it older than the emigration of the English into Britain, though it was not reduced to writing until after their settlement in this island. Jacob Grimm assigned it to the early part of the eighth century<sup>1</sup>; Müllenhoff to the second half of the seventh century<sup>2</sup>.

Rönning has discussed the question (p. 98 ff.) and his conclusion is that probably the poet lived in the second half of the eighth century. To this he has been helped by the idea, first suggested by Grundtvig, that it must have been before the Danish scourge<sup>3</sup>.

No one, since the early time when the Beowulf was supposed to be a historical narrative, has ever thought of looking for a direct note of time in the contents of the poem. But if my interpretation is approved, it will follow that the chronological data we seek are embodied allegorically in the very centre of the poem, and that it

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to *Andreas und Elene*, p. xlvii.

<sup>2</sup> In Haupt, *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, xiv. 243.

<sup>3</sup> In working this out he has made indirect use of the passage 175-188.



is thereby determined to the last quarter of the eighth century. If the names of Garmund, Offa, and Eomær, shadow forth the pedigree of the Mercian kings; if the praise of Offa I is in the nature of incense to Offa II, and if the fictitious name of Thrytho has been suggested (at least in part) by the name of the Mercian queen Cynethryth, then the date of the poem is written legibly enough, though it has to be read through a veil of allegory.

### 6. *The Unity of the Poem.*

But I think we may reach a higher generalization in our endeavour to catch the spirit of the poem. There is one great thought which animates the whole poem, and it is a thought proper to the time. It is the germinant thought of social organism, and it provides a theme adequate for an Epic, because it is coextensive with moral and political life so far as it had then been developed, and accordingly it embraces human interests of the highest order.

The thought is this:—*Mutual dependence is the law of human society.* No one is independent; not the strongest or noblest or most exalted; for he depends upon the support of those who are under him. Consideration and generosity from him to them; honour and fidelity and devotion from them to him; these are the rudimentary foundations upon which alone it is possible to erect and edify a stable fabric of government, to build up a State.

This thought pervades the allegorical narrative as a whole, and this thought is the text of that well-abused discourse which is the centrepiece of the poem. The unity of the poem is manifested by the readiness of every part, whether action or discourse, to be interpreted by

reference to this thought. In the discourse of the aged king it is expanded ; in the occasional maxims interspersed it is condensed ; in the narrative as a whole it is dramatically represented and illustrated.

Hrothgar's discourse is a warning of the dangers which attend high success. Nothing is worse for men, nothing more hurtful to their understanding, than the consciousness of possessing a power which none can control. This is the cause of Hrothgar's solicitude for Beowulf, towards whom he has conceived a paternal affection. It is as if he said : ' Do not fall into the snare of fancying yourself out of the reach of danger, and exempt from the common liabilities of humanity. When Heremod knew he had no match, he degenerated into a hectoring bully, he became intolerable, and he was driven forth by his own subjects.'

The general sense of the poem is this. There is work for the age of Blood and Iron, but such an age must yield to a better. Force is not the supreme and final arbiter of human destiny ; above and behind Might is enthroned the diviner genius of Right. In this idea we recognize the essential thought of Civilization, the clue to emergence out of barbarism. And even further back, as if in barbarism itself, we see a germ of culture and the gentler forms of life. The honoured position of woman, which here rests upon ancestral custom, is full of promise for the development of the nobler instincts of Society.

### 7. *A Constructive Essay.*

We have followed the path of analytical investigation till it has led us to certain conclusions as to the motives which determined the structure of this poem.



We may now (in some sense) test our conclusions by trying whether they will work constructively. If they are true, and if we really have caught the design of our poet, we may endeavour to accompany him in the process of selecting material for the construction of his poem, and match each step with the requirements of the ruling motive, guiding our reconstruction by the principles of historical and poetical probability.

It was at the moment when Anglian power, which had been growing for nearly 300 years, had attained to imperial grandeur; when the sceptre of Mercia in the hand of the formidable Offa awed the nations of the British world with an authority not unmeet to be compared with that of Karl on the mainland. This power had been brought to its present culmination by the sword<sup>1</sup>, and there was reason to fear that it might rely upon the sword for its duration.

In Offa's realm there was a man who saw this. He was a poet and a scholar<sup>2</sup> and a statesman; he was sincerely attached to the interests of the royal house and still more to those of the nation; and he was minded to make his poetry subservient to these interests. From the hand of such a man we have a poem which suggests the thought that this was not the only poem its author wrote. But in all probability it was his chief work, and it seems to have been prepared for some high occasion. There is in Offa's reign an occasion altogether singular, an occasion which occurs

<sup>1</sup> In the Annals appended to *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, we read : Anno 757 . . . Eodem etiam anno Offa, fugato Beornredo, Merciorum regnum sanguinolento quæsivit gladio, ed. Hussey, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> I think our poet was not unread in Virgil;—he seems also to have been acquainted with the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, as Mr. Hugh Stewart will probably shew when his 'Boethius' appears.

but once in the whole Anglo-Saxon period. Offa caused his son Ecgferth to be crowned king during his life-time ; and there are traits in this poem which suggest association with that singular event.

Contemplating the design of a poem, the author had a didactic motive, he had advice in his mind, but wishing his advice to be unobtrusive, and to distil as the dew, he was naturally led to select a form more or less remote and allegorical. The ancient fame of Danish kings, who had (according to tradition) wielded empire among their islands and peninsulas, furnished a good poetic parallel of imperial splendour. Britain is never mentioned, nor England, nor Mercia, nor anything in Britain ; it is veiled under the landscape of Denmark. Hrothgar is represented as doing very much what Offa did. He prospered in war, he held wide sway, and he was minded to have a splendid Court. So he erected the grandest Hall ever heard of in the world, conspicuous over many lands, and there he lived and entertained and distributed rings to his deserving thanes, and all was going merrily, when an unexpected foe brought his glory to ruin and himself to despair. Did our poet anticipate the heathen scourge which was even then impending ? Certainly, however we may account for it, this is not a bad allegory of what actually happened to the power of Mercia. Anyhow, I take Hrothgar for a type of Offa.

As it is a maxim of law that there is no wrong without a remedy, so it is a maxim of Romance that there is no monster of atrocity without a deliverer. Danish traditions were familiar with the story of a royal hero who dared monsters, and even combated a dragon—if we may judge by Saxon Grammaticus, who exhibits two such champions, both scions of the royal house of Denmark, namely, Frotho and Fridlevus. Such was



the hero our author determined to select, and as the relations of England and Denmark up to his time had been peaceful and pleasant, there was nothing in Danish association to break the poetic charm. The hero of the poem was to be a deliverer, and he must be a figure whom the poet could adorn with royal virtues which should provoke to emulation the young prince upon whom the destinies of England appeared to hinge.

How did he select the person of his hero, and what was it that determined his name? Let us look at the pedigree which serves as the avenue to King Hrothgar, and especially that part of it which is in the Prologue to the poem. It is asserted by Müllenhoff, and it is (I think) generally admitted, that this Prologue is no conventional importation from any previous work, but that it was made for the place in which it stands, after the poem or much of it was as it is now;—and this being the case, we may naturally turn to it with a look of enquiry as to the train of thought that was running in the architectonic mind of the poet.

In any *bonâ fide* pedigree of the Kings of Denmark there would have been a long list of names between Healfdene (Hrothgar's father), and Woden, the father of all Teutonic kings, but none of these were taken by our poet to grace his Prologue. Healfdene was of course many generations below Woden, but all these, and even Woden himself, are omitted, and Healfdene is made the son of a father whose traditional place is far above the stage of Woden. The pedigree of Woden was a pretty long one, and the records differed in the details of it, but amidst all variations there were three names that were constant, and always in the same order, namely, Scaef, Scyld, Beow. However the pre-Wodenic pedigree might differ in other respects, this triad was

sure to be there<sup>1</sup>. One story ran that Scaef was found on some shore whither he had been driven by wind and wave, a lone infant in a boat with a sheaf of corn, and hence he was called Scaef<sup>2</sup>.

Now it is to be observed that our poet drops Scaef and begins with Scyld. There is an assignable reason why he should like to begin with Scyld. The Danish kings were called Scyldings; Scyld was their eponym. This is plain enough. But why should he violate tradition so far as to invest Scyld with the attributes of Scaef? Scaef was a foundling, but tradition said that Scyld was the son of Scaef; no legend told of Scyld as a foundling. Then why does our poet deviate so strangely from the track consecrated by custom? Are we to think of this as a mere random accident, or perhaps a whim prompted by some convenience of alliteration or other shallow poetic motive? No, this deviation would not be so lightly made; it would hardly be done unless it afforded accommodation of a very essential nature to the author's purpose and design.

And such accommodation is apparent when we recall the history of Offa's career. Offa had risen from comparative obscurity—that we know—though the details

<sup>1</sup> In Ethelwerd's genealogy on the occasion of the death of Æthelwulf (Alfred's father) he counts the generations from Cerdic up to Woden and finds that Woden is the ninth in the upward reckoning, and then proceeding still higher from Woden he comes to Beow the seventeenth, Scyld the eighteenth, and Scef the nineteenth. This name is the summit of pedigree. Of this high patriarch the chronicler then relates the following tradition: 'Ipse Scef cum uno dromone advectus est in insula oceani quæ dicitur Scani, armis circumdatus, eratque valde recens puer, et ab incolis illius terræ ignotus; attamen ab eis suscipitur, et ut familiarem diligenti animo eum custodierunt, et post in regem eligunt; de cujus prosapia ordinem trahit Athulf rex.'

<sup>2</sup> According to Ethelwerd, the shore was 'Scani,' which seems to be Scania, in the south-west of Sweden.



are unknown—and he rose to be the greatest man in the West, except Karl; in his own world of islands absolutely supreme. In short, the elevation of Scyld, and his conquest of power, as told in this Prologue, seems to make a fitting allegory of the career of the great King of Mercia. And if we can admit this into our minds, there is another thing that will follow naturally. We shall then see a meaning in that—I was going to say most singular passage in the poem, only there are so many singular passages—we shall then see a meaning in the magnificently archaic and honorific obsequies of Scyld. It is neither more nor less than the apotheosis of a hero, according to the highest pattern of heathen and legendary ritual.

But if the poet has so far made free with tradition as to invest Scyld with the attributes of Scaef, his treatment of the son of Scyld is still more characterized by novelty and originality. He had here a fair field for the play of imagination, if, as is most probable, all he had from tradition was the bare name of Beow. Indeed, we need not hesitate to say, that the whole description of Beowulf Scylding contained in lines 12 to 25, is pure invention and original device. Not only so, but more—as I hope to prove before I have done—it is the genuine utterance of the mind of our poet, of the poet (if there was more than one) who left this poem as we now possess it.

Müllenhoff's criticism on these fourteen lines is calculated to win for them a peculiar attention. The whole of these fourteen lines he pronounces to be certainly spurious (*gewis unecht*), a remark which shows that he detached these lines, and regarded them as an insertion, as being something intrusive. But this (from him) would have been too ordinary a remark for

special notice ;—of a much rarer kind is the observation which he makes on the latter six of the fourteen. In these Müllenhoff suspected a political drift<sup>1</sup>. To this observation I attach great value, because it is not of the sort that this critic is prone to make. I am not aware of any other instance in which Müllenhoff has seen in the text a reflection of the political life of the writer's time. And the very chasm there is between his view of the poem and mine, makes me welcome a criticism which, at a point of vital importance, tends to the confirmation of my theory. What Müllenhoff saw as an isolated and intrusive observation, I recognize as the natural out-cropping of a continuous train of thought, which pervades and vitalizes the entire poem.

Yes, it has, I believe, a political drift. As Scyld is an allegory of Offa, so is Beowulf, the son of Scyld, an allegory of Ecgferth, the son of Offa. And as this hopeful young prince is the spring of the whole poem, so is this description of the mythic Beowulf the vital germ of the entire composition. It is the kernel of the Prologue ; an inner Prologue within the Prologue ; it is encased between the two parts of Scyld's portrayal, like a flower between the protecting halves of a natural sheath.

In the last clause of this inner Prologue occurs a word *LOF* praise, to which I attach a peculiar value. This word occurs again in the closing line of the Poem, but in the interval it appears only once, and then in a position which, whether mechanically or mentally con-

<sup>1</sup> Der allgemeine satz 20-25, dass ein junger fürst im hause seines vaters die leute durch freigebigkeit für spätere zeiten und den kriegsfall sich geneigt machen und überall jeder durch löbliche taten sich hervor-tun solle, giebt ausserdem zu manigfachen, selbst politischen bedenken anlass. Haupt's *Zeitschrift*, vol. xiv. p. 195 ; in the *Reprint*, p. 112.



sidered, is central. More than any other word that can be named, that word LOF is the Motto of this Poem. What a prince must aim at is PRAISE, that is to say, the moral approbation of his peers.

The chief contents of this passage are these : 'Beowulf was born by the grace of God for the comfort of man ;—he was brave, and while yet in his father's nurture he gat him a name by his liberality and friendly bearing ; whereby he attached to his person the youth of the rising generation and had men ready to fight for him in his riper years.'

Watch the poet's way in saying this ; observe its fullness as a programme of princely duty in the eighth century ; observe how every relation is conscientiously regarded—the reigning king his father, the subject nation, the young nobles who are the companions, and (as later times spoke) the peers of the prince.

There is more than poetic description in all this ; there is a political application, and most likely it is warmed with the ardour of personal affection. I thank Müllenhoff for having remarked that this passage had probably a political drift, the more so as the said remark made nothing for his own disintegrating scheme.

It is characteristic of our poet that he makes divers personages bear parts in the same *rôle*, and here we are at the central illustration of it. The character of a prince, sketched in outline for a frontispiece, is enlarged to life-size for the body of the poem. Beowulf, the hero, is the namesake of his progenitor, whose attributes he revives and adorns, and presents them to us in the near view as the other in the remote and legendary background. The deeds of this hero were indeed world-old in our poet's time, and they had often been sung ; but never before did the hero bear the name of Beowulf.

That name is peculiar to this poet's work, and it was suggested by the assimilation of the hero to the poetic progenitor.

In the ultimate development of the poem it was distinction enough to call the one Beowulf the Scylding, because by that time the hero had come to be called Beowulf the Goth. But in that earlier stage of the composition where we now in imagination are, the hero was also a Scylding, a descendant of the first Scylding, Beowulf, whose name he bore. At first, the poem had unity of place, Heorot was from first to last the centre of its landscape, and the hero was a Dane, an obscure scion of the royal house. This has been demonstrated above.

I have digressed. We were following the footsteps of our poet, and I have digressed into comment. The proceeding was irregular, but it was not without cause. That passage of fourteen lines is so important as a key to the whole survey, that I wanted to fix the reader's eye upon this feature, as on an explorer's landmark.

As we follow the movements of our poet, we look with curiosity and enquiring wonder at this:—What moved the poet to extend his field, and bring Beowulf in as a deliverer from another nation? Certainly it helped somewhat to distinguish the two Beowulfs, but that might have been easier done by simply changing the hero's name. Was it possibly meant to impart the idea that a prince's education was not complete without foreign adventure, or at least foreign travel? We see this idea operative in the ninth century, in the education of Alfred. Moreover, in this very poem it is touched on in conversation between Hrothgar and Beowulf.

Anyhow, the hero must be made a foreigner of; that



is determined, whatever the cause. But now, what kingdom shall he come from? The poet will create a Utopian kingdom for the occasion. There has been a discussion whether he came from Jutland or Gothland, and I am with those who uphold Gothland, because it seems to me on the whole to fit in best with the descriptions. But it is not a matter of importance except only in relation to details, especially in the interpretation of the warlike movements between the Goths and the Swedes. It seems to me that these descriptions are more intelligible by supposing Hygelac's kingdom to be Gothland than upon any other view, such as that of Professor Sophus Bugge, who identifies it with Jutland, as Leo did long ago. But though Scania was thought of, the realm of Hygelac is essentially Utopian.

That this Utopian part was inserted into a poem which was already more or less formed; and also that the poet used it for framing therein his allegorical sketch of the royal family, has been shown above;—I will here only add further that the Swedish wars in the Third Part are introduced as a natural consequence of the Gothic realm. The fact appears to be, that the poet, when he had put this newly-invented branch of the romance to the uses at first designed, then proceeded to give it more root and hold in the composition, until being gradually drawn in and becoming enamoured of his latest study, he pursued the expansion of it further and further.

And if we keep ourselves in sympathy with the poet, the Swedish wars have this advantage that they cause the prospects of the Gothic realm to be nearest the heart of the reader at the close of the poem, and it verily seems as if the tremendous *volte face* which the poet has executed in the development of his plot, had carried



himself away and transferred his own affections from historical Denmark to his Utopian kingdom in Gothland.

One question remains—who was the poet? Six years ago in *THE TIMES* (29 October, 1885), I ventured to name Hygeberht, the man chosen by Offa to be Archbishop of Lichfield, and of whom we read in the *Life of Offa II*, that he was the chief adviser of that king. It may seem idle to fasten upon a particular name, a surmise of authorship which cannot be substantiated. But I have found it useful to myself as a way of personifying the qualities which are manifested in this poem. By his position and character Hygeberht fulfils the requirements to a degree which, if it falls short of full probability, is certainly calculated to stimulate curiosity and further enquiry.

According to the above account of the poem, it is the work of an eminent person, of one who could speak with authority to the highest in the land. We have reason to think that the vernacular poetry was still cultivated by the great; Asser says it was a favorite study of King Alfred's. This whole performance marks an author, who, while he was a lover of his native poetry, and intended in this poem to keep within the sphere of it, yet lets us see that he had a share in world-wide knowledge. In him the popular and the learned culture are united.

And there is one little feature in which may possibly lurk a direct trace of Hygeberht. I have shown above that the character of Hygelac is in a peculiar sense the poet's own. The name indeed was borrowed from Chochilaicus in Gregory of Tours, but it was arbitrarily transformed into harmony with the chief element in Hygeberht's name. The queen of Hygelac is Hygd, another name from the same root, and both these names



are of allegorical significance ;—Prudence and Discretion. This significance is, however, so identified with the drift of the poem, that if it is withal a poet's mark, it is very unobtrusively and skilfully done.

Long after the above argument was completed, and had taken the form in which it now appears, I came upon the following passage in Professor Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies* (1888), p. 264, under the title of 'The Interpretation of Literature':—

The happiest moment in a critic's hours of study is, when seemingly by some divination, but really as the result of patient observation and thought, he lights upon the central motive of a great work. Then, of a sudden, order begins to form itself from the crowd and chaos of his impressions and ideas. There is a moving hither and thither, a grouping or co-ordinating of all his recent experiences, which goes on of its own accord, and every instant his vision becomes clearer, and new meanings disclose themselves in what had been lifeless and unilluminated. It seems as if he could even stand by the artist's side and co-operate in the process of creating. With such a sense of joy upon him, the critic will think it no hard task to follow the artist to the sources from whence he drew his material—it may be some dull chapter in an ancient chronicle, or some gross tale of passion by an Italian novelist—and he will stand by and watch with exquisite pleasure the artist handling that crude material, and refashioning and refining it, and breathing into it the breath of a higher life. Even the minutest difference of text between an author's earlier and later draft, or a first and second edition, has now become a point not for dull commentatorship, but a point of life, at which he may touch with his finger the pulse of the creator in his fervour of creation.

This seems wonderfully to express the conditions of the poem and my pleasure in discovering them. But, after all, a man may have some taste of that pleasure without a real discovery. A theory generated by study, when it becomes a favorite of the mind, makes quick alliance with that strong deceiver Self-Complacency ;

and if it has been so with me, if I am deceived in the theory which I have constructed of the origin of this poem, I pray the candid critic to shatter the vain fabric without delay, before it can impose itself upon any other mind<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It was my design to add a section on the career of Romantic Poetry, in order to shew that the Beowulf is but the eldest extant member of a long and prolific strain of literature. But two causes induce me to draw rein. One is, because this Introduction is already long enough;—the other is, because the quotations from medieval romances which are strewn up and down in the Notes, will probably make the inference easy and spontaneous. As when, to test the identity of a stream whose visible continuity is interrupted by a subterranean course, chips and chaff are tipped into the swallet, and they at length emerge, though in diminished numbers, at the other end; so the small relics of epic phrase which are still seen floating here and there on the surface of the medieval lays, prove the continuity of a literary pedigree, which has been interrupted by a breach in the documentary record.

One item only I would specify, and that because it is a query, which if propounded here may possibly draw attention. I wonder then whether the name of Beves or Bevis, in the famous Romance of Sir Bevis of Southampton, may possibly be the name Beowulf or Beow, which having been in foreign parts has returned home with an altered physiognomy? Consider the parallels indicated in the Notes on lines 343, 865, 2367, 2704.



# THE DEEDS OF BEOWULF

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## THE FIRST PART.

**Prologue.** The chivalry of the Danish Empire. The coming of Scyld and his glorious career. The birth of Beaw and the exemplary pursuits of his youth. The passing of Scyld.

WHAT ho ! we have heard tell of the grandeur of the imperial kings of the spear-bearing Danes in former days, how those ethelings promoted bravery. Often did Scyld of the Sheaf wrest from harrying bands, from many tribes, their convivial seats ; the dread of him fell upon warriors, whereas he had at the first been a lonely foundling ;—of all that (humiliation) he lived to experience solace ; he waxed great under the welkin, he flourished with trophies, till that every one of the neighbouring peoples over the sea were constrained to obey to him, and pay trewage :—that was a good king !

To him was born a son to come after him, a young (prince) in the palace, whom God sent for the people's comfort. He (God) knew the hard calamity, what they had erst endured when they were without a king for a long while ; and in consideration thereof

the Lord of Life, the Ruler of Glory accorded to them a time of prosperity.

Beowulf (i. e. Beaw) was renowned, his fame sprang  
20 wide ; heir of Scyld in the Scedelands. So ought a  
young chief to work with his wealth, with gracious  
largesses, while in his father's nurture ; that in his  
riper age willing comrades may in return stand by him  
at the coming of war, and that men may do his bidding.  
Eminence must, in every nation, be attained by deeds  
(worthy) of PRAISE.

As for Scyld, he departed, at the destined hour, full  
of exploit, to go into the Master's keeping. They then  
carried him forth to the shore of the sea, his faithful  
30 comrades, as he himself had requested, while he with  
his words held sway as lord of the Scyldings ; dear  
chief of the land, he had long tenure of power.

There at hythe stood the ship with ringèd prow,  
glistening fresh, and outward bound ; convoy for a  
prince. Down laid they there the lovèd chief, dispenser  
of jewels, on the lap of the ship, the illustrious (dead)  
by the mast. There was store of precious things,  
ornaments from remote parts, brought together ; never  
heard I of craft comelier fitted with slaughter weapons  
40 and campaigning harness, with bills and breast-mail :—  
in his keeping lay a multitude of treasures, which were  
to pass with him far away into the watery realm. Not  
at all with less gifts, less stately opulence, did they  
outfit him, than those had done, who at the first  
had sent him forth, lone over the wave, when he was  
an infant. Furthermore they set up by him a gold-  
wrought banner, high over his head ; they let the



holm bear him, gave him over to ocean; sad was  
their soul, mourning their mood. Men do not know 50  
to say of a sooth, not heads of Halls, men of mark  
under heaven, Who received that burthen!

## I.

**King Hrothgar, his popularity. The building of Heorot,  
and the happy life of the Court. Grendel.**

Then was in the towers Beowulf of the Scyldings,  
the dear king of his people, for a long time famous  
among the nations—his father was gone elsewhere,  
patriarch from family seat—till in succession to him  
was born the lofty Healfdene; he governed while  
he lived, old and warlike, contented Scyldings. To  
him four children, one after another, awoke in the 60  
world: Heorogar commander of armies and Hrothgar  
and Halga the good: I heard that Elan queen [of  
Ongentheow] was consort of the warlike Scylfing.

To Hrothgar was given martial spirit, warlike ambi-  
tion; insomuch that his cousins gladly took him for  
leader, until the young generation grew up, a mighty  
regiment of clansmen. Into his mind it came, that he  
would give orders for men to construct a hall-building,  
a great mead-house, (greater) than the children of men 70  
had ever heard tell of; and that therewithin he would  
freely deal out to young and old what God should give  
him, save people's land and lives of men.

Then I heard of work widely proclaimed to many  
a tribe throughout this world, to make a fair gathering-  
place of people. His plan was in good time accom-  
plished, with a quickness surprizing to men; so that  
it was all ready, the greatest of hall-buildings. He

gave it the name of Heorot, he who with his word had  
80 wide dominion. He belied not his announcement;—  
rings he distributed, treasure at the banquet. The hall  
towered aloft, high and with pinnacles spanning the  
air; awaited the scathing blasts of destructive flame.  
No appearance was there as yet of knife-hatred starting  
up between son-in-law and father-in-law in revenge of  
blood.

Then the outcast creature, he who dwelt in darkness,  
with torture for a time endured that he heard joy-  
ance day by day, loud sounding in hall; there was  
90 the swough of the harp, the ringing song of the  
minstrel.

Said one who was skilled to narrate from remote  
time the primæval condition of men; quoth he—  
“The Almighty made the earth, the country radiant  
“with beauty, all that water surroundeth, delighting in  
“magnificence. He ordained Sun and Moon, lumi-  
“naries for light to the dwellers on earth, and adorned  
“the rustic regions with branches and leaves; life also  
“he created for all the kinds that live and move.”

100 Thus they, the warrior-band, in joyance lived and  
full delight;—until that one began to work atrocity, a  
fiend in the hall. The grim visitant was called  
Grendel, the dread mark-ranger, he who haunted  
moors, fen and fastness: — the unblessed man  
had long time kept the abode of monsters, ever  
since the Creator had proscribed them. On Cain’s  
posterity did the eternal Lord wreak that slaughter,  
for that he slew Abel. He profited not by that  
110 violence; but He banished him far away, the Maker  
for that crime banished him from mankind. From



that origin all strange broods awoke, eotens and elves and ogres, as well as giants who warred against God long time ;—He repaid them due retribution.

## II.

**Grendel, his successful raid. The dejection of Hrothgar and his court.**

He set out then as soon as night was come, to explore the lofty house ; how the mailed Danes had after carousal bestowed themselves in it. So he found therein a princely troop sleeping after feast ; they knew not sorrow, desolation of men. The baleful wight, grim and 120 greedy, was ready straight, fierce and furious, and in their sleep he seized thirty of the thanes ; thence hied him back, yelling over his prey, to go to his home with the war-spoils, and reach his habitation. Then was in the dawning and with early day the war-craft of Grendel plain to the grooms ; then was upraised after festivity the voice of weeping, a great cry in the morning. The illustrious ruler, the honoured 130 prince, sat wobegone ; majestic rage he tholed, he endured sorrow for his thanes :—since they had surveyed the track of the monster, of the accursed goblin ;—that contest was too severe, horrible, and prolonged. It was not a longer space, but the interval of one night, that he again perpetrated a huger carnage ; and he recked not of it—outrage and atrocity ; he was too fixed in those things. Then was it not hard to find some who sought a resting-place elsewhere more at large, a bed among the castle-bowers, when to 140 them was manifested and plainly declared by conspicuous proof the malice of the hell-thane ;—whoever had once

escaped the fiend did from thenceforward hold himself farther aloof and closer. So domineered and nefariously warred he single against them all, until that the best of houses stood empty. The time was long; twelve winters' space did the Friend of the Scyldings suffer indignity, woes of every kind, unbounded sorrows; 150 and so in process of time it became openly known to the sons of men through ballads in lamentable wise, that Grendel warred continually against Hrothgar; he waged malignant hostilities, violence and feud, many seasons, unremitting strife; he would not have peace with any man of the Danish power, or remove the life-bale, or compound for tribute; nor could any of the senators expect worthy compensation at the hands of 160 the destroyer; the foul ruffian, a dark shadow of death, was pursuing the venerable and the youthful alike. He prowled about and lay in wait; at nights he continually held the misty moors;—men do not know in what direction hell's agents move in their rounds.

Many were the atrocities which the foe of mankind, the grisly prowler, oft accomplished, hard indignities,—Heorot he occupied, the richly decorated hall, in dark nights—yet was he by no means able to come nigh the throne, sacred to God, nor did he share the sentiment thereof.

170 That was a huge affliction for the friend of the Scyldings, heart breaking. Many a time and oft did the realm sit in conclave; they meditated on a remedy, what course it were best for them, soul-burthened men, to take against these awful horrors. Sometimes they vowed at idol fanes, honours of sacrifice; with words they prayed that the Goblin-queller would afford them



relief against huge oppressions. Such was their custom, heathens' religion ; they thought of hell in 180 their imagination ; they were not aware of the Maker, the Judge of actions, they knew not God the Governor, nor did they at all understand how to glorify the Crowned Head of the heavens, the Ruler of glory.

It is woe for him who is impelled by headlong perversity to plunge his soul into the gulph of fire ; not to believe in consolation nor in any way turn :—well is it for him who is permitted, after death-day, to visit the Lord, and claim sanctuary in the Father's arms.

### III.

#### **The voyage of the hero. A parley.**

Thus was the son of Healfdene perpetually tossed with the trouble of that time ; the sapient man was 190 unable to avert the woe. Too heavy, horrible, and protracted was the struggle which had overtaken that people ; tribulation cruel, hugest of nocturnal pests.

That in his distant home learnt athane of Hygelac's, a brave man among the Goths ; he learnt the deeds of Grendel ; he was of mankind strongest in might in the day of this life ; he was of noble birth and of robust growth. He ordered a wave-traveller, a good one, to be prepared for him ; said he would pass over the swan- 200 road and visit the gallant king, the illustrious ruler, inasmuch as he was in need of men. That adventure was little grudged him by sagacious men, though he was dear to them ; they egged on the daring spirit, they observed auguries. The brave man had selected champions of the Leeds of the Goths, the keenest whom he could find ; with fourteen in company he took

to ship ;— a swain for pilot, a water-skilled man, pointed out the landmarks.

210 Time went on ; the floater was on the waves, the boat under the cliff. Warriors ready dight mounted on the prow ; currents eddied, surf against the beach ; lads bore into the ship's lap bright apparel, gallant harness of war ; the men, the brave men on adventure, shoved off the tight-timbered craft. So the foamy-necked floater went forth over the swelling ocean urged by the wind, most like to a bird ; till that in  
220 due time, on the next day, the coily-stemmed cruiser had made such way that the voyagers saw land, sea-cliffs gleaming, hills towering, headlands stretching out to sea ; then was the voyage accomplished, the water-passage ended. Then lightly up the Weder Leeds and sprang ashore, they made fast the sea-wood, they shook out their sarks, their war-weeds, they thanked God for that their seafaring had been easy.

230 Then from his rampart did the Scyldings' warden, he who had to guard the sea-cliffs, espy men bearing over bulwark bright shields, accoutrements ready for action ;—curiosity urged him with impassioned thoughts (to learn) who those men were. Off he set then to the shore, riding on horseback, thane of Hrothgar ; powerfully he brandished a huge lance in his hands, and he demanded with authoritative words—“Who are ye arm-bearing  
“men, fenced with mail-coats, who have come thus with  
240 “proud ship over the watery high-way, hither over the  
“billows ? Long time have I been in fort, stationed on  
“the extremity of the country ; I have kept the coast-  
“guard, that on the land of the Danes no enemy with  
“ship-harrying might be able to do hurt :—never have



"shield-bearing men more openly attempted to land  
 "here; nor do ye know beforehand the pass-word of  
 "our warriors, the confidential token of kinsmen.  
 "I never saw, of eorlas upon ground, a finer figure  
 "in harness than is one of yourselves; he is no mere  
 "goodman bedizened with armour, unless his look <sup>250</sup>  
 "belies him, his unique aspect. Now I am bound to  
 "know your nationality, before ye on your way hence  
 "as explorers at large proceed any further into the land  
 "of the Danes. Now ye foreigners, mariners of the  
 "sea, ye hear my plain meaning; haste is best to let me  
 "know whence your comings are."

## IV.

**Beowulf explains their visit to the Warden's satisfaction.**

**Thereupon he guides their march to Heorot. The Warden returns.**

To him the chiefest gave answer; the captain of the  
 band unlocked the treasure of words: "We are people  
 "of Gothic race, and hearth-fellow of Hygelac. My <sup>260</sup>  
 "father was celebrated among the nations, a noble  
 "commander by the name of Ecgtheow; he lived to  
 "see many years, ere he departed an aged man out  
 "of his mansion; he is quickly remembered by every  
 "worshipful man all over the world. We with  
 "friendly intent have come to visit thy lord, the son  
 "of Healfdene, the guardian of his people; be thou  
 "good to us with instructions! We have for the  
 "illustrious prince of the Danes a great message; there <sup>270</sup>  
 "is no need to be dark about the matter, as I suppose.  
 "Thou knowest if it is so as we have heard say for a

“truth, that among the Scyldings some strange depre-  
“dator, a mysterious author of deeds, in the darkness  
“of night inflicts in horrible wise monstrous atrocity,  
“indignity, and havoc. Of this I can, in all sincerity  
“of heart, teach Hrothgar a remedy; how he, so wise  
280 “and good, shall overpower the enemy; if for him  
“the fight of afflictions was ever destined to take a  
“turn, better times to come again, and the seethings  
“of anguish grow calmer; or else for ever here-  
“after tholeth he a time of tribulation, sore distress, so  
“long as the best of houses resteth there upon her  
“eminence.”

The Warden addressed them, where he sat on his  
horse, an officer undaunted: “Of every particular  
“must a sharp esquire know the certainty as to words  
“and works—any one who hath a sense of duty. I  
290 “gather from what I hear that this is a friendly band  
“to the lord of the Scyldings. March ye forward  
“bearing weapons and weeds, I will guide you: likewise  
“I will command my kinsmen thanes honourably to  
“keep against every foe your vessel, the newly dight,  
“the boat on the beach: until the neck-laced craft shall  
“bear back again over the water-streams her dear lord  
“to Wedermark. To such a benign adventurer is it  
300 “given, that he passeth unscathed through the en-  
“counter of battle.”

They proceeded then on their march; the vessel  
remained still, rode on her cable, the wide-bosomed  
ship, at anchor fast;—the boar-figures shone, over the  
cheek-guards, pranked with gold, ornate and hard-  
welded;—the farrow kept guard. In fighting mood  
they raged along, the men pushed forward; down-hill



they ran together, until they could see the Hall structure, gallant and gold-adorned; that was to dwellers on earth the most celebrated of all mansions <sup>310</sup> under the sky, that in which the Ruler dwelt; the gleam of it shot over many lands. Then did the warrior point out to them the court of the valiant, which was now conspicuous;—that they could go straight to it. Like a man of war, he wheeled about his horse, and spake a parting word; “It is time  
“for me to go; may the allwielding Father graciously  
“keep you safe in adventures! I will to the sea, to  
“keep guard against hostile force.”

## V.

**Arrival and accost. Beowulf sends in his name.**

The street was stone-paven; the path guided the <sup>320</sup> banded men. The war-corslet shone, hard, hand-locked; the polished ring-iron sang in its meshes, when they in grim harness now came marching to the Hall. The sea-weary men set down their broad shields, bucklers mortal hard, against the terrace of that mansion. Then they seated themselves on the bench;—their mail-coats rang, harness of warriors;—the spears stood, sea-men’s artillery, stacked together, ash-timber with <sup>330</sup> tip of grey; the iron troop was accoutred worthily.

Then a proud officer there questioned the martial crew as to their kindred:—“Whence bring ye  
“damasked shields, gray sarks, and visored helms;—a  
“pile of war shafts? I am Hrothgar’s herald and  
“esquire. Never saw I foreigners, so many men, loftier  
“looking. I think that ye for daring, not at all of des-

“perate fortune, but for courageous emprize, have come  
340 “to visit Hrothgar.”

To him then with gallant bearing answered the proud  
leed of the Wederas ; words spake he back, firm  
under helmet :—“ We are Hygelac’s table-fellows ; my  
“name is Beowulf. I will expound mine errand to the  
“son of Healfdene, to the illustrious prince, to thy  
“lord, if he will deign us that we may approach him  
“so good.”

Wulfgar addressed them—that was a leed of the  
Wendlas ; his courage had been witnessed by many, his  
350 valour and wisdom :—“ Thereanent will I ask the Friend  
“of the Danes, the Scyldings’ lord, the ring-dispenser,  
“according as thou dost petition, the illustrious chief  
“(will I ask) concerning thy visit ; and to thee promptly  
“declare the answer, which the brave prince is pleased  
“to give me.”

Thereupon he returned briskly to where Hrothgar  
sate, old and hoary, with his guard of warriors : he  
went with gallant bearing till he took his stand before  
the shoulders of the Danish prince ; he knew the  
360 custom of nobility. Wulfgar addressed himself to his  
liege lord : “ Here are arrived, come from far, over  
“the circuit of ocean, men of the Goths ; the com-  
“panions name their chief Beowulf. They make peti-  
“tion, that they, my prince, may be permitted to  
“exchange discourse with thee : do not thou award  
“them a refusal of thy conversation, benignant Hrothgar !  
“They by their war-harness appear worthy of the rever-  
“ence of eorlas ; certainly the chief is a valiant man,  
“he who has conducted those martial comrades  
370 “hither.”



## VI.

The old king knows all about him, and orders him to be admitted. Beowulf explaineth his visit and enterprizeth the battle to fight the foe. He will remove the scourge, or die in the attempt.

Hrothgar, crown of Scyldings, uttered speech ;  
“I knew him when he was a page. His good old  
“father was Ecgtheow by name ; to whose home  
“Hrethel of the Goths gave over his only daughter ;  
“it is his offspring surely, his grown-up son, that is  
“hither come, come to visit a loyal friend. Sure  
“enough they did say that—the sailors who carried  
“thither for compliment the presents to the Goths—  
“that he hath thirty men’s strength in his handgrip, a <sup>380</sup>  
“valiant campaigner. Him hath holy God of high  
“grace sent to us, sent to the western Danes, as  
“I hope, against Grendel’s terror ; I must proffer the  
“brave man treasures for his greatheartedness. Be  
“thou full of alacrity, request the banded friends to  
“enter, one and all, into my presence. Say to them  
“moreover expressly with words, that they are welcome  
“visitors to the Danish leeds.” [Then to the door of  
the hall Wulfgar went] he announced his message :— <sup>390</sup>  
“To you I am commanded to say by my chieftain the  
“lord of the eastern Danes, that he knoweth your noble  
“ancestry, and ye to him are, over the sea-waves, men  
“of hardihood, welcome hither. Now ye can go, in  
“your warlike equipage, with helm on head, to the  
“presence of Hrothgar ; leave the war-boards, here to  
“abide, and the wooden battle-shafts till the parley is

“over.” Up then arose the prince : about him many  
400 a trooper, a splendid band of thanes ; some remained  
there, they kept the armour, as their brave captain  
bade. They formed all together, as the officer (Wulf-  
gar) showed the way, under the roof of Heorot ; [he  
went with courage high] with a firm look under his  
helmet, till he took his stand in the royal chamber.  
Beowulf uttered a speech—on him his byrnie shone,  
a curious net-work linkéd by cunning device of the  
artificer—“ To Hrothgar hail ! I am Hygelac’s kinsman  
“and cousin-thane ; I have undertaken many exploits in  
410 “youngsterhood. To me on my native soil the affair of  
“Grendel became openly known ; seafaring men say that  
“this hall do stand, fabric superb, of every trooper empty  
“and useless, as soon as the light of evening under the  
“cope of heaven is hidden from view. Then did my  
“people, the best of them, sagacious fellows, O royal  
“Hrothgar, insense me that I should visit thee ; be-  
“cause they knew the strength of my might ; they had  
“themselves been spectators when I came off my cam-  
420 “paign battered by foes, where I bound five monsters,  
“humbled the eoten brood ; and in the waves I slew  
“nickers in the night-time, I ran narrow risks, avenged  
“the grievance of the Wederas—they had been ac-  
“quainted with grief—a grinding I gave the spoilers ;—  
“and now against Grendel I am bound, against that  
“formidable one, single-handed, to champion the quar-  
“rel against the giant. Wherefore I will now petition  
“thee, prince of the glorious Danes, thou roof-tree of  
“the Scyldings, one petition ; that thou refuse me  
430 “not, oh thou shelter of warriors, thou imperial lord  
“of nations, now I have come from such a distance,



“that I may have the task alone—I and my band of  
 “eorls, this knot of hardy men—to purge Heorot.  
 “I have learnt too that the terrible one out of bravado  
 “despises weapons; I therefore will forgo the same—  
 “as I hope that Hygelac my prince may be to me of  
 “mood benignant,—that I bear not sword or broad  
 “shield, or yellow buckler, to the contest; but with  
 “handgrip I undertake to encounter the enemy, and  
 “contend for life, foe to foe; there shall he whom 440  
 “death taketh resign himself to the doom of the Lord.

“I suppose that he will, if he can have his way, in  
 “the hall of battle devour fearlessly the men of the  
 “Goths, just as he often did the power of the Hreth-  
 “men. Thou wilt not need to cover my head (with  
 “a mound), but he will have me all blood-besprent, if  
 “death taketh me; he will bear away the gory corpse  
 “with intent to feast upon it, the solitary ranger will eat  
 “it remorselessly, will stain the moor-swamps; no need 450  
 “wilt thou have to care any longer for the disposal of  
 “my body. Send to Hygelac, if Hild take me, the  
 “matchless armour that protects my breast, bravest  
 “of jackets;—that is a relic of Hrethla’s, a work  
 “of Weland’s. Wyrd goeth ever as she is bound.”

## VII.

**Hrothgar embraces his visitor’s offer, and pours out  
 the tale of his misery. The new comers are feasted  
 in the hall.**

Hrothgar, crown of Scyldings, uttered speech:  
 “For pledgèd rescue thou, Beowulf my friend, and at  
 “honour’s call, hast come to visit us. Thy father

460 "did fight out a mighty feud; he was the banesman of  
 "Heatholaf among the Wylfings; then the nation could  
 "not keep him for dread of invasion. Therefrom he  
 "went over the yeasty waves to visit the Southron folk  
 "of the Danes, of the honourable Scyldings, at the time  
 "when I had just then become king over the Danish  
 "folk, and in my prime swayed the jewel-stored  
 "treasure-city of heroes: when Heregar my elder  
 "brother was dead, no longer living, Halfdene's son.  
 470 "He was better than I! Afterwards I composed the  
 "feud for money; I sent to the Wylfings over the  
 "water's ridge ancient treasures; he swore oaths (of  
 "homage) to me.

"It is a sorrow for me in my soul to tell to any mortal  
 "man what humiliation, what horrors, Grendel hath  
 "brought upon me in Heorot with his malignant strata-  
 "gems. My hall-troop, my warrior band, is reduced to  
 "nothing; Wyrd hath swept them away in the hideous  
 "visitation of Grendel. God unquestionably can arrest  
 480 "the fell destroyer in his doings. Full oft they  
 "boasted when refreshed with beer, troop-fellows  
 "over the ale-can, that they in the beer-hall would  
 "receive Grendel's onset with clash of swords. Then  
 "was this mead-hall at morning-tide, this royal saloon  
 "bespattered with gore, at blush of dawn, all the bench-  
 "timber was reeking with blood, the hall with deadly  
 "gore; so much the less owned I of trusty lieges, of  
 "dear nobility, when death had taken those away.  
 490 "Sit now to banquet, and merrily share the feast, brave  
 "captain, with (thy) fellows, as thy mind moves thee."

Then was there for the Goth-men all together, in the  
 beer-hall, a table cleared; there the resolute men went



to sit in the pride of their strength. A thane attended to the service; one who bore in his hand a decorated ale-can; he poured forth the sheer nectar. At times a minstrel sang, clear-voiced in Heorot; there was social merriment, a brave company of Danes and Wederas.

### VIII.

Unferth the king's orator is jealous. He baits the young adventurer, and in a scoffing speech dares him to a night-watch for Grendel. Beowulf is angered, and thus he is drawn out to boast of his youthful feats.

Unferth made a speech, Ecglaf's son; he who sate 500  
at the feet of the Scyldings' lord, broached a quarrel-  
some theme—the adventure of Beowulf the high-souled  
voyager was great despite to him, because he grudged  
that any other man should ever in the world achieve  
more exploits under heaven than he himself:—"Art  
"thou that Beowulf, he who strove with Breca  
"on open sea in swimming-match, where ye twain out  
"of bravado explored the floods, and foolhardily in  
"deep water jeopardded your lives? nor could any man, 510  
"friend or foe, turn the pair of you from the dismal  
"adventure! What time ye twain plied in swimming,  
"where ye twain covered with your arms the awful  
"stream, meted the sea-streets, buffeted with hands,  
"shot over ocean; the deep boiled with waves, a  
"wintry surge. Ye twain in the realm of waters  
"toiled a se'nnight; he at swimming outvied thee, had  
"greater force. Then in morning hour the swell cast  
"him ashore on the Heathoram people, whence he 520  
"made for his own patrimony, dear to his Leeds he  
"made for the land of the Brondings, a fair strong-

“hold, where he was lord of folk, of city, and of rings.  
“All his boast to thee-ward, Beanstan’s son soothly  
“fulfilled. Wherefore I anticipate for thee worse luck—  
“though thou wert everywhere doughty in battle-shocks,  
“in grim war-tug—if thou darest bide in Grendel’s way  
“a night-long space.”

530 Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech:—“Lo,  
“big things hast thou, my friend Unferth, beer-  
“exalted, spoken about Breca; hast talked of his  
“adventure! Rightly I claim, that I have proved  
“more sea-power, more buffetings in waves, than any  
“other man. He and I used to talk when we were  
“pages, and we used to brag of this—we were both  
“of us at that time in youngsterhood—how that we two  
“would out on the main and put our lives in jeopardy;  
“and that we matched so. Drawn sword we had,  
540 “as we at swimming plied, firm in hand: we meant  
“to guard us against the whale-fishes. Not a whit  
“from me could he further fleet on sea-waves, swifter  
“on holm; not from him would I. So we twain kept  
“together in the sea for the space of five nights, till  
“the flood parted us, the seething billows, coldest  
“weather, darkening night, and a fierce wind from the  
“north came dead against us; rough were the waves.  
550 “The sea-fishes’ temper was stirred; and then it was  
“that my body-sark, firm, hand-locked, gave me help  
“against the spiteful ones; the plaited war-jacket lay  
“about my breast, gold-pranked. Me to bottom dragged  
“a spotty monster, tight the grim thing had me in grip;  
“nathless ’twas given me that I got at the vermin  
“with point, with hand-bill; combat dispatched the  
“mighty sea-brute by my hand.



## IX.

Beowulf continues his story; and tells how he made havoc of the sea-monsters. He waxes warm, and flouts the orator. He vows to face Grendel.

Restoration of social harmony, whereof the queen is the centre. Hrothgar solemnly commits to Beowulf the night-ward of Heorot.

“As repeatedly as the spiteful assailants shrewdly 560  
“pressed me, I served them (liberally) with precious  
“sword as was meet. They did not have their slaugh-  
“terous revel, the foul brigands, that they should eat  
“me up sitting around their supper, by the floor of the  
“sea; but (on the contrary) next morning, wounded with  
“weapons along the wrack of the wave, they lay high  
“and dry; by swords they had their quietus, so that  
“never afterwards about the swelling highway should  
“they let seafaring men of their destined course.

“Light came from the East, the bright signal of God; 570  
“the waves grew calm, so that I was able to see the  
“forelands, the windy walls. Fortune often rescues  
“the warrior, if he is not fated to die; provided that his  
“courage is sound! Anyhow 'twas my good luck, that  
“I slew with the sword nine nicors. Never did I hear  
“of a harder fight under heaven's roof in the night-  
“time, nor of a man more distressed in ocean streams;  
“howbeit I escaped the clutch of foes with my life,  
“though worn and spent. Me the sea upcast, the 580  
“swirling flood, upon the land of the Fins, the heaving  
“billow. I never heard say aught by thee of such deadly  
“fightings, sword-clashings: Breca never yet, at war

“play, not he nor you, deed achieved so valorously  
“with flashing swords—of that I brag not much—  
“though thou wast banesman to thy brother, thy next  
“of kin ; for which thou shalt in hell damnation dree,  
590 “though doughty be thy wit. I say to thee of a sooth,  
“thou son of Ecglaf, that never had Grendel the foul  
“ruffian made such a tale of horrors for thy prince,  
“such disgrace in Heorot, if thy courage were, if thy  
“spirit were, so formidable as thou thyself claimest.  
“But he hath found out that he need not greatly fear re-  
“prisals, grisly edge-clash, from your people, the mighty  
“Scyldings ; he taketh blackmail, respecteth no one of  
“the people of the Danes, but maketh a sport of war,  
600 “slaughtereth and feasteth :—no thought hath he of a  
“fight with the spear-Danes. But now shall the Goth  
“show him erelong puissance and emprize in the way  
“of war. After that, he who can shall go proud into  
“the mead-hall, when over the sons of men the morning  
“light of another day, the sun, with radiance clothed,  
“shall shine from the south.”

Then was in bliss the dispenser of wealth, grey-haired and militant ; he believed in help ; the prince of  
610 the glorious Danes, the shepherd of the people, perceived in Beowulf a resolute purpose. There was laughter of mighty men ; music sounded ; the words (of song) were jovial.

Wealhtheow moved forward, Hrothgar's queen, mindful of ceremonies ; she greeted in her gold array the men in Hall ; and then the noble lady presented the beaker first to the sovereign of the east-Danes, wished him blithe at the banquet, and dear to his Leeds ;—he merrily enjoyed the feast and the Hall-cup, valiant king.



Then the Helming princess went the round, to elder 620  
and to younger, every part; handed the jewelled cup;  
till the moment came, that she, the diademed queen,  
with dignity befitting, brought the mead-cup nigh to  
Beowulf; she greeted the Leed of the Goths, she  
thanked God with wise choice of words, for that her  
desire was come to pass, that she in any warrior be-  
lieved for remedy of woes. He, the death-doing warrior,  
accepted the beaker at Wealhtheow's hand, and then he 630  
descanted, elate for battle;—Beowulf son of Ecgtheow  
uttered speech: "I undertook that, when I went on  
"board, and sate on the sea-boat, with the company of  
"my fellows, that I once for all would work out the will  
"of your Leeds, or fall in the death-struggle, in the  
"grip of the fiend. I am bound as an eorl to fulfil the  
"emprize, or in this mead-hall to meet my death-day."  
To the lady the words were well-liking, the vaunt-speech 640  
of the Goth; she walked gold-arrayed, high-born queen  
of the nation, to sit by her lord.

Then was again as erst within the hall the lofty  
word outspoken, the company was happy, the sound  
was that of a mighty people; until that sudden the  
son of Healfdene was minded to retire to his nightly  
rest; he knew that against the high Hall war was  
determined by the monster, from the time when they  
could [not] see the sun's light or shrouding night came  
over all, and the creatures of darkness came stalking 650  
abroad; he warred in obscurity. All the company arose.  
Then did man greet man, Hrothgar greeted Beowulf,  
bespake him luck, mastery in the house of hospitality;  
and delivered this speech: "Never before, since I could  
"heave hand and shield, did I confide the guard-house

“of the Danes to any man, but only to thee now on this  
 “occasion. Have now and hold the best of houses ;  
 660 “resolve on success : show valour amain ; be vigilant  
 “against the foe ! Thou shalt not have any desire  
 “unfulfilled, if thou that mighty work with life achievest.”

## X.

**Beowulf doffs his armour, and watches unarmed. A  
 point of honour. His companions sleep.**

So Hrothgar, chief of Scyldings, took his departure  
 with retinue of men, out of hall ; he was minded to join  
 Wealhtheow his queen and consort. The Glory of  
 kings had—so men told one another—set up a hall-  
 warden against Grendel ; he had undertaken the single  
 service about the patriarch of the Danes, offered watch  
 against the monster ;—assuredly the Gothic Leed with  
 670 joyous mien trusted in valorous might and the smile of  
 Providence.

Then put he off from him his iron byrnie, helmet  
 from head ; delivered to his esquire the richly-  
 dight sword, choicest steel ; and charged him with the  
 care of his war-harness. Then did the valiant man  
 Beowulf the Goth utter some vaunting words ere he  
 mounted on bed : “I reckon myself to be in the fury  
 “of battle, in warlike feats, no wise below the preten-  
 “sions of Grendel ; for that reason I will not with  
 680 “sword give him his quietus, deprive him of life,  
 “although I very well may. Nought knoweth he of  
 “those gentle practices, to give and take sword-cuts, to  
 “hew the shield ; dread though he be in feats of horror :  
 “—but we twain shall in the night-time supersede



“the blade, if he dare to court war without weapon ;  
“and thereafter may the Allwise God, the holy Lord,  
“adjudge success on which side soever may to him  
“appear meet !”

Then the daring warrior laid him down ; the pillow received the countenance of the eorl ; and round about him many a smart sea-warrior couched to his hall- 690 rest. Not one of them thought that from that place he should ever again visit his own estate, his folk and castle, where he was brought up ; but they had been informed that before now a bloody death had all too much reduced them, the Danish people, in that festive hall. But to them, the Leeds of Wedermark, did the Lord grant webs of war-speed, strength and support, that they by the force of one, by his single prowess, should all be victorious over their foe. For a 700 truth it is shewn, that the mighty God has governed mankind in every age !

He came in dim night, marching along, ranger of the dark. The defenders slept, they whose duty it was to guard that gabled mansion—all slept but one !

It was very well known to all men, that the ruthless destroyer might not against the will of God whirl them under darkness ; but (all the same) he, vigilant in defiance of the foe, awaited in full-fraught mood the arbitrament of battle.

## XI.

Grendel's last meal. The battle begins.

710 Then came Grendel marching from the moor under the misty brows ; he bore the wrath of God. The assassin meant to catch some one of human-kind in that lofty hall ; he tore along under heaven in the direction where he knew the hospitable building, the gold-hall of men, metal-spangled, ever ready for his entertainment ; —that was not the first time he had visited Hrothgar's homestead. Never had he in his life-days, earlier or later, met so tough a warrior, such hall-guards !

720 Came then journeying to the hall the felon mirth-bereft ; suddenly the door, fastened with bars of wrought iron, sprang open as soon as he touched it with his hands ; thus bale-minded and big with rage he wrecked the vestibule of the hall. Quickly after that the fiend was treading on the paven floor ; he went ravening ; out of his eyes there stood likest to flame an eerie light. He perceived in the hall many warriors, a  
730 troop of kinsmen, grouped together, a band of cousins, asleep. Then was his mood exalted to laughter ; he counted, the fell ruffian, that he should sever, ere day came, the life of each one of them from his body, seeing that luck had favoured him to gratify his slaughterous appetite. That was not however so destined, that he should be permitted to eat any more of mankind after that night.

Mighty rage the kinsman of Hygelac curbed, considering how the assassin meant to proceed in the course of his ravenings. Nor was the marauder



minded to delay it ; but he seized promptly at 740  
his first move a sleeping warrior, tore him in a  
moment, crunched the bony frame, drank blood of  
veins, swallowed huge morsels ; in a trice he had  
devoured the lifeless body, feet, hands, and all. He  
stepped up nearer forward ; he was then taking with  
his hand the great-hearted warrior on his bed. The  
fiend reached towards him with his fang ;—he  
promptly seized with shrewd design and grappled  
his arm. Quickly did the boss of horrors discover 750  
that, that never in all the world, all the quarters of  
the earth, had he met man more strange with bigger  
hand-grip ; he in mood became alarmed in spirit ; but  
never the quicker could he get away. His mind was to  
be going ; he wanted to flee into darkness ; rejoin the  
devils' pack ; his entertainment there was not such  
as he before had met with in bygone days. Then did  
the brave kinsman of Hygelac remember his discourse  
of the evening ; up he stood full length, and grappled 760  
with him amain ; his fingers cracked as they would  
burst. The monster was making off, the eorl followed  
him up. The oaf was minded, if so be he might, to  
fling himself loose, and away therefrom to flee into fen-  
hollows ; he knew that the control of his fingers was  
in the grip of a terrible foe ; that was a rash expedi-  
tion which the devastator had made to Heorot !

The Guard-hall roared ;—upon all the Danes, upon  
the inhabitants of the castle, upon every brave man,  
upon the eorlas, came mortal panic. Furious were both 770  
the maddened champions, the building resounded ; it  
was a great wonder that the genial saloon endured the  
combatants, that it did not fall to ground, that fair

ornament of the country ; only that it was inwardly and outwardly so firmly besmithied with iron staunchions of masterly skill ! There, from the sill started—as my story tells—many a mead-bench adorned with gold, where the terrible ones contended. Thereanent had the Scylding senators weened at the first, that never would any man by mortal force be able to wreck it, 780 the beautiful and ivoried house, or by craft to disjoint it ;—leastwise fire's embrace should swallow it up in vapoury reek.

The noise rose high, with renewed violence ; the north-Danes were stricken with eldritch horror every one, whosoever heard even out on the wall the doleful cry, the adversary of God yelling a dismal lay, a song unvictorious :—the thral of hell howling for his wound. 790 He held him too fast, he who was in main the strongest of men in the day of this life.

## XII.

**Grendel's flight. His arm remains with Beowulf, and is set up as a trophy. Heorot is purged.**

The shelter of eorlas was not by any means minded to let the murderous visitant escape alive ; he did not reckon his life-days useful to any one of the Leeds. There did many an eorl of Beowulf's unsheath his old heirloom ;—would rescue the life of their master, their great captain ; if so be they might. They knew it not, —when they plunged into the fight, the stouthearted 800 companions, and thought to hack him on every side, reach his life,—that no choicest blade upon earth, no war-bill would touch that destroyer, but he had



by enchantment secured himself against victorious weapons, edges of all kinds. His life-parting [in the day of this life] was destined to be woeful, and the outcast spirit must travel far off into the realm of fiends. Then discovered he that, he who erst in wanton mood had wrought huge atrocity upon mankind 810—he was out of God's peace—that his body was not at his command, but the valiant kinsman of Hygelac had got hold of him by the hand ; to either was the other's life loathsome. A deadly wound the foul warlock got ; on his shoulder the fatal crack appeared ; the sinews sprang wide, the bone-coverings burst. To Beowulf was victory given ; Grendel must flee life-sick there- 820 from to the coverts of the fen, must make for a cheerless habitation ;—full well he knew that the end of his life was reached, the number of his days. All the Danes had in the issue of that dire struggle the fulfilment of their desire.

He had then purged, he who but now came from far, sagacious and resolute, Hrothgar's hall ; he had rescued it from danger ; had succeeded in his night-task with brilliant achievement. The Leed of the Gothic companions had made good his vaunt to the east-Danes ; likewise he had entirely remedied the horror, the 830 harrowing sorrow, which they were enduring before, and of dire necessity were forced to suffer ;—huge indignity. That was a token conspicuous, when the hero of battle had affixed the hand, arm, and shoulder—that was the whole affair of Grendel's fang—under the gabled roof.

## XIII.

Horsemen upon Grendel's track. Riding, racing, and tale-telling. Beowulf's adventure a minstrel's theme ;— his fame coupled with Sigemund's, contrasted with Heremod's.

Then was in the morning—so goes my story—about the gift-hall many a warrior ; the chiefs of the folk came  
840 from far and near, through divers ways, to survey the prodigy, the traces of the loathed one. His life-ending was no grief whatever to any of those who surveyed the track of the vanquished, how he in doleful mood away from that place, in buffets worsted, had, death-doomed and fugitive, fled in mortal terror to the Nicers' mere. There was the face of the lake surging with blood, the gruesome splash of waves all turbid with  
850 reeking gore, with sword-spilth ;—the death-doomed (Grendel) had discoloured it ;—presently he, void of joy-ance, in fenny covert yielded up his life, his heathen soul ; there did Hela receive him.

Thence back home went the old Companions along with many a bachelor from the pleasure-trip ; from the Mere in high spirits riding on horses, barons on jennets. There was Beowulf's achievement rehearsed ; many a one often said that south nor north between the seas all the wide world over, other none of shield-  
860 bearing warriors under the compass of the firmament preferable were or worthier of sovereignty. They did not however at all disparage their natural lord, gracious Hrothgar ; but he was a good King !

Now and then the gallant warriors loosened their



russet nags for a gallop, to run a match, where the turfways looked fair, or were favourably known. Otherwhiles a thane of the king's, bombastic groom, his mind full of ballads, the man who remembered good store of old-world tales—word followed 870 word by the bond of truth—began anon to rehearse, cunningly to compose, the adventure of Beowulf, and fluently to pursue the story in its order, with interlacing words. At large he detailed, what he had heard say of Sigemund's exploits, much that was strange, the battle-toil of the Wælsing, distant expeditions, things the sons of men quite knew not of, feud and atrocity ; —none but Fitela by his side, when he would say aught 880 of such matter, uncle to nephew, as they had ever stood by one another in every struggle : they had with swords laid low many of the monster brood. To Sigemund there sprang up after his death-day no little fame ; forasmuch as he, hardy in fight, had quelled the Dragon, the keeper of treasure ; he, the son of a prince, in under the hoary rock, single-handed enterprized the perilous deed ;—Fitela was not with him. Nathless he 890 succeeded so well that the sword sped through the stupendous worm, till it stuck in the bank, noble iron ! the dragon died the death. The champion had by valour attained that he might enjoy the jewel-hoard at his own discretion ; he laded the sea-boat, the son of Wæls bore to the bosom of the ship the bright ornaments ; the Worm dissolved with heat. He was by daring exploits the most famous of adventurers far and 900 wide over the world, shelter of warriors ; such eminence he won.

When Heremod's warfare had slackened, his puis-

sance and emprise, he among the Eotens was decoyed forth into the power of enemies, promptly sent out of the way. Him did billows of sorrow disable too long; he to his Leeds, to all his princes, became a loyal anxiety. Moreover, in his earlier times, many a wise countryman had often deplored the adventurous life of the ardent soul, such a one as had trusted to him for  
 910 remedy of grievances, that the royal child might grow powerful, succeed to the state of his fathers, protect the people, the treasure and the castle, realm of heroes, patrimony of the Scyldings. There was he, Hygelac's kinsman, to all mankind, and to his friends, more acceptable; the other was seized with fury.

At intervals racing they with their horses measured the fallow streets. Then was the light of morning launched and advanced; there was many a varlet  
 920 going eager-minded to the lofty Hall to see the strange prodigy;—likewise the king himself from his domestic lodge, keeper of jewelled hoards, trod with glorious mien, gorgeously distinguished in the midst of a great retinue;—and his queen with him, measured the path to the mead-hall with a bevy of ladies.

#### XIV.

**A patriarchal thanksgiving. Beowulf's account of the fray. Effect upon Unferth.**

Hrothgar uttered speech—he was going to Hall; he stood on the Staple; he beheld the steep roof gold-glittering, and the hand of Grendel.

“For this spectacle a thanksgiving to the Almighty  
 “be done without delay! Much despite I endured,



“capturings by Grendel ; always can God work won- 930  
“der after wonder, the Lord of Glory ! It was but  
“now that I thought I should never see a remedy  
“for any of my woes, while the best of houses stood  
“blood-stained, soaked in slaughter ; the woe had  
“scattered all my senators, as men who weened not  
“that they ever should rescue the national edifice of  
“my Leeds from the hateful ones, the demons and  
“bogles.

“Now hath a lad, through might of God, achieved 940  
“the deed which we all erewhile were unable with our  
“wisdom to compass. Lo ! that may she say, what  
“lady soever mothered that child by human genera-  
“tion, if yet she liveth, that to her was the Ancient  
“Master favourable in her child-bearing !

“Now I will heartily love thee, Beowulf, youth most  
“excellent, as if thou wert my son ; from this time  
“forth keep thou up the new relation. There shall be  
“no lack to thee of any desires in the world, so far as I 950  
“have power. Full oft have I for less service decreed  
“recompense, honour from the treasury, to a less dis-  
“tinguished hero, less prompt to fight.

“Thou thyself hast by deeds achieved, that thy fame  
“will live ever and always. May the Almighty reward  
“thee with good, as he hath just now done !”

Beowulf uttered speech, Ecgtheow's son : “We  
“discharged that high task, fighting with right good  
“heart ; shrewdly we enterprized the terror of the 960  
“unknown. I'd a liked it vastly better, that thou'dst  
“a seen his very self, the fiend in full gear, ready to  
“drop. I thought quickly to fix him on a bloody bed  
“with hard grapplings, that he for my hand-grip should

"lie death-struggling, unless his body vanished ; I could  
 "not, as the Ancient would not, baulk his passage ; I  
 "did not stick close enough to him, the man-queller ;  
 970 "the fiend was too over-mighty in his making off.  
 "However he left his fist—to save his life and mark  
 "his track—his arm and shoulder : not thereby how-  
 "ever has the wretched being bought reprieve ; none  
 "the longer will he live, the loathsome pest burthened  
 "with crimes ; but the wound hath him, in deadly grip  
 "close pinioned, in baleful bands ; in that condition  
 "must he, crime-stained wretch, abide the great doom,  
 "according as the Ancient One may will to assign his  
 "portion."

980 A silenter man was then the son of Ecglaf in the brag  
 of martial exploits ; since it was by the hero's valour the  
 ethelings beheld the hand, the fiendish fingers, over the  
 high roof, every one straight before him. Each one of  
 the nail-places was likest to steel, hand-spur of the  
 heathenish marauder, horrible spikes ; every one de-  
 clared there was nothing so hard would graze them, no  
 sword of old celebrity that would take off the monster's  
 990 bloody war-fist.

## XV.

**Heorot restored. Rejoicings and giving of gifts.**

Then was order promptly given that the interior of  
 Heorot should be decorated ; many they were, of men  
 and of women, who garnished that genial palace, hos-  
 pitable hall. Gold-glistening shone the brocaded tapes-  
 tries along the walls, pictures many for the wonder of  
 all people who have an eye for such. That bright



building was terribly wrecked in its whole interior, though it had been strengthened with iron fastenings; the hinges were wrenched away; the roof alone had escaped altogether unhurt, when the destroyer, stained 1000 with atrocities, took to flight in desperation of life.

It is not easy to elude [death], try it who will; but every living soul of the sons of men, of dwellers upon ground, must of necessity approach the destined spot, where his body, bedded in fast repose, shall sleep after supper.

Then was the time and the moment, that Healfdene's son should go to Hall; the king was minded himself to 1010 share the feast. Never that I heard of did that nation in stronger force about their bounty-giver more bravely muster. They went to bench in merry guise—while their kinsmen enjoyed the copious feast, and with fair courtesy quaffed many a mead-bowl—mighty men in the lofty hall, Hrothgar and Hrothulf. The interior of Heorot was wholly filled with friends; no treachery had imperial Scyldings at that early date attempted.

Then did the son of Healfdene present to Beowulf a golden ensign in reward of victory, decorated staff- 1020 banner, helmet and mail-coat; many beheld when they brought the grand treasure-sword before the hero. Beowulf tasted the beaker on the hall-floor; no need had he to be ashamed of that bounty-giving before the archers. I heard not many instances of men giving to other at ale-bench four treasures gold-bedight in friendlier wise. About the helmet's roof the crest was 1030 fastened with wire-bound fencing for the head, in order that file-wrought war-scoured blades might not cruelly

scathe it, when the shielded fighter had to go against angry foes.

Then did the Shelter of eorlas command to bring eight horses gold-cheeked into the court within the palings; on one of them stood the saddle gaily caparisoned and decorated with silver, which was the war-seat of the high king, when the son of Healfdene  
 1040 was minded to exercise the play of swords;—never failed in the front the charger of the famous (king) when the slain were falling. And then did the chief of the Ingwines deliver unto Beowulf possession of both at once, both horses and arms;—bade him enjoy them well. So manfully did the illustrious chieftain, the hoard-warden of heroes, reward battle-risks with horses and treasures, so as never will any mispraise them who is minded to speak sooth according to right.

## XVI.

**Gifts to Beowulf's comrades. Music and Song. The Lay of Hnæf, relating the consequences of Finn's treachery.**

Moreover, to each one of those who had made the  
 1050 voyage with Beowulf, did the Captain of warriors give a precious gift at the mead-bench, an old heir-loom; and gave orders to compensate with gold for that (missing) one, that one whom Grendel had atrociously killed, as he would have killed more of them, had not the providence of God, had not Wyrð, stood in his way;—and, the courage of that man. The Ancient One ruled then, as he now and alway doth, over all persons of human race; therefore is prudence each-  
 1060 where best, fore-cast of soul. Much experience of



pleasant and of painful must he make, who long here in these struggling days brooks the world.

Then was song and instrumental music together blended, concerning Healfdene's war-chief,—the harp was struck, a ballad often recited, what time the hall-joy along the mead-bench was invoked by Hrothgar's minstrel—concerning the sons of Finn, when the alarm overtook them: "A mighty man of the half-Danes, Hnæf the Scylding, . . . . .  
 "was doomed to fall in the Frisian conflict. 1070

"Hildeburh however had no cause to extol the fidelity of the Eotens; without her fault she was in the clash of shields bereft of those dear to her, sons and brother; they fell one after another wounded with the spear;—that was a doleful princess. Not without cause did the daughter of Hôc bewail the sad event when morning came, and she in full daylight could see the carnage of her kin, where she had till now enjoyed the world's best happiness. 1080

"Battle had destroyed all Finn's thanes, save a few only, so that he could not, on the place of debate, against Hengest at all contend, nor rescue the sad remnant of his men from the hostility of the king's thane; but they (the Frisians) proffered him (Hengest) conditions of peace, that they would wholly yield to him the possession of another mansion, hall, and high seat, so that they (the Danes) might share equal possession of it with the sons of the Eotens, and at money-givings the son of Folcwalda (i. e. Finn) should day 1090  
 "by day honour the Danes, should gratify with rings the troop of Hengest, with metallic wealth of beaten gold, in exactly the same measure as he purposed in

“the festive hall to encourage the Frisians born.  
“Thereupon they ratified on the two sides a fast  
“treaty of peace; Finn engaged, loyally and un-  
“reservedly, with oaths to Hengest, that he would  
“govern that sad remnant by constituted law in all  
1100 “honour; so that not any man of them, by word or  
“work, should break the treaty; nor with guileful  
“intent ever mention make, though they (the Danes)  
“had followed their patron’s banesman, when bereaved  
“of a lord, seeing that they were by necessity driven to  
“it. If on the other hand any of the Frisians with  
“aggressive speech were recalling the blood-feud, it  
“should be atoned by the edge of the sword. The  
“oath it was sworn, and massive gold was hoisted out  
“of the treasury.

“Of the warlike Scyldings the best campaigner was  
1110 “on the fire-heap ready; at the pyre was conspicuous  
“the blood-stained sark, the swine all gilded, the boar  
“of hard iron, many a noble wounded to death;—  
“several had fallen in the struggle. Orders were given  
“by Hildeburh, that at Hnæf’s pyre her own son  
“should be committed to flame, that the body should be  
“burnt and placed on the bale-fire. The poor lady  
“wailed on his shoulder, she uttered her grief in  
“lamentations; the war-hero passed up in flame, soared  
1120 “to the clouds. Hugest of corpse-fires, it roared on its  
“eminence; heads wasted away, wound-gates did burst;  
“then sprang blood from the place where the body had  
“been cruelly assaulted. The fire devoured them all—  
“greediest of demons—all of those whom war had there  
“destroyed, of both peoples; their bloom was departed.



## XVII.

The remainder of the Lay of Hnæf. A picture of social pleasure. Speech of the queen to the king.

“The warriors departed to visit their dwellings, bereft  
 “of friends to re-visit Friesland, their homesteads and  
 “head-borough. Hengist however during that blood-  
 “stained winter tarried with Finn, loyally and without  
 “cavil ; his home he thought of, though he was not able 1130  
 “to drive over the sea his ring-prowed ship ; the holm  
 “surged with storm, battled with wind ; winter locked  
 “the wave with icy barrier ; until that the next year  
 “came to town, as even now it continues to do ; and  
 “those punctual time-keepers, the days of glorious  
 “weather. Then was winter gone, the bosom of the  
 “earth was fair ; the adventurer was astir, the guest  
 “forward to quit hospitable courts.

“He however (Hengest) thought more on revenge  
 “than on sea-voyaging, if he could bring about a 1140  
 “collision, that he might therein remember the sons  
 “of the Eotens. So (the better to hide his thought) he  
 “did not decline military brotherhood, when Hun laid  
 “upon his breast (the sword) Lafing, luminary of battle,  
 “best of blades ; the edges of that sword were famous  
 “among the Eotens. Consequently the savage-minded  
 “Finn was by and bye overtaken by glib sword-bale at  
 “his own manor ; when once Guthlaf and Oslaf, off their  
 “sea-voyage, made sore mention of the grim assault,  
 “brought up a deal of wrongs ; he could not refrain 1150  
 “his wild rage in his breast. Then was the hall be-  
 “dight with embattled corpses ;—likewise Finn was

"slain, the king in the midst of his guard, and the  
 "queen taken. The archers of the Scyldings con-  
 "veyed to their ships the whole establishment of the  
 "king of the country, whatsoever they at Finn's Hám  
 "could find of jewels and curious gems. On the sea-path  
 "they conveyed the courtly ladies to the Danes, brought  
 "them to their Leeds." The Lay was sung to its end,  
 1160 the minstrel's descant.

Enjoyment rose high as before, bright was the sound  
 of revelry, the drawers served wine out of curious  
 flagons. Then came Wealhtheow forward, moving under  
 her golden diadem, to where the two brave men sate,  
 uncle and nephew; up to that time was their natural  
 affection undisturbed, either to other true. Likewise  
 there Unferth the speaker sate at the feet of the  
 Scyldings' lord; every man of them trusted his spirit  
 that he had great courage, though he had not been loyal  
 to his kindred at sword-play.

Spake then the lady of the Scyldings:—"Receive  
 1170 "this beaker, sovereign mine, wealth-dispenser! be thou  
 "merry, a munificent friend of men, and speak to the  
 "Goths with comfortable words. So it behoves one to  
 "do! Near and far, thou now hast peace! To me it  
 "hath been said, that thou wouldest have the hero for  
 "thy son. Heorot is purged, the bright ring-hall;  
 "dispense whilst thou mayest many bounties;—and to  
 "thy children leave folk and realm, when thou must  
 1180 "away to see Eternity. I know my gracious Hrothulf  
 "that he will honourably govern the younger ones, if  
 "thou earlier than he, O friend of the Scyldings,  
 "quittest the world. I think that he will repay our  
 "children with good, if he that fully remembers,



“what gracious attentions thou and I bestowed for  
 “his comfort and advantage in the time past when  
 “he was an infant.” She turned then towards the bench  
 where her boys were, Hréthric and Hróthmund, and  
 the sons of mighty men, the youth all together; there 1190  
 the brave man sate, Beowulf of the Goths, by the  
 two brothers.

### XVIII.

**Gifts of the queen to the hero, and her speech to him.**

**The hall is arranged as a dormitory.**

To him the cup was borne; and friendly invitation  
 (to drink) was offered with words; and twisted gold  
 was graciously presented, armlets two, a mantle and  
 rings; the grandest of carcanets that I have heard of  
 on earth. None superior among the treasures of men  
 heard I ever of under heaven, since Hama bore away  
 to the bright fortress the necklace of the Brisings— 1200  
 jewel and casket; he fled the toils of Eormanric;  
 chose eternal counsel.

That collar had Hygelac of the Goths, grandson (or  
 nephew) of Swerting, on his latest expedition, when  
 under his flag he defended his prize, guarded the spoil;  
 him Fate took off, when he for wantonness challenged  
 woe, feud with the Frisians; he carried that decoration,  
 the costly stones over the wave-bowl, the mighty chief-  
 tain; he fell shield in hand; so then came into the power 1210  
 of the Franks the corpse of the king, the breast apparel,  
 and the collar along with the rest: inferior combatants  
 stripped the slain by the fortune of war; the people  
 of the Goths tenanted the bed of death.—The Hall  
 echoed with sound (of Music).

Wealhtheo uttered speech; she spake before that company: "Brook this collar, Beowulf, beloved youth, "with luck, and make use of this mantle; stately pos-  
 sessions; and prosper well; make thyself famous by  
 1220 "valour, and to these boys be thou a kind adviser!  
 "I will reward thee for it. Thou hast attained, that far  
 "and near, for all future time, men will celebrate thee,  
 "even as widely as the sea encircleth windy walls. Be  
 "thou, whilst thou live, a happy prince! With good will  
 "I accord thee precious possessions. Be thou to my son  
 "loyal with deeds, sustaining joyance. Here is each  
 "warrior to other true, kindly disposed, loyal to their  
 1230 "chief; the thanes are obedient, the people all ready!  
 "Retainers be merry, do as I bid you."

She went then to her chair. There was high festivity; men drank wine, Wyrð they knew not, the cruel destiny, as it had gone forth, for many a noble. By and bye the evening came, and Hrothgar betook him to his lodge, the prince to his repose.

Countless nobles guarded the Hall, as they had often done in earlier time: they cleared away the bench-  
 1240 boards; it was strewn throughout with beds and bolsters. One of the revellers, whose end was near, lay down to rest in hall a doomed man. At their heads they set the shields, the bright bucklers; there on the bench was over each etheling, plain to be seen, the towering war-helmet, the ringéd mail-coat, the shaft of awful power. Their custom was that they were constantly ready for war, whether at home or in the field, in both cases alike, whatever the occasion on which their liege lord had need of their services;—  
 1250 it was a good people.



## THE SECOND PART.

## XIX.

In the night the old water-hag comes, seizes one of the sleepers, and fetches away Grendel's arm. Beowulf is hastily summoned to the king at early dawn.

So they sank down to sleep. One there was who sorely paid for that night's rest, in the manner that had very often happened to them, since Grendel had occupied the gold-hall, had perpetrated violence, until his end arrived, death after crimes. That became manifest, widely known to men, that an avenger still lived after the (slain) foe ; long to remember the disaster ; Grendel's mother, beldam troll-wife, thought of her desolation, creature that had to dwell in the dreari- 1260  
ness of water, cold streams, ever since Cain was the knife-bane of his only brother, his father's son ; he then went forth an outlaw, marked with murder, shunning human society ; he kept the wilderness. Thence grew a number of branded creatures ;—one of those was Grendel, horrible ban-wolf ; he at Heorot found a vigilant man waiting for battle. There did the monster grapple with him ; he however remembered the strength of his 1270  
might, the marvellous gift which God had given to him, and he trusted to the Supreme for grace, courage, and support ; therefore he overcame the fiend, subdued the hellish demon ; so he departed crest-fallen, void of joyance, to see his death-place, foe of man. And yet his

mother, nevertheless, bloodthirsty and gallows-minded, was going to enter upon a sorrow-fraught way to wreak the death of her son.

So the hag came to Heorot, where the jewelled Danes  
 1280 slept throughout the Hall. Then was it for the eorlas  
 a sudden upset, when Grendel's mother burst into  
 their midst. The terror was less (i. e. than the terror  
 of Grendel) just in the same proportion as female  
 strength, woman's war-terror, is (of less account) with  
 an armed man; when the well-hafted steel, hammer-  
 toughened, the bloodstained sword, with edge effective,  
 sheareth resisting boar on helmet. Then was the  
 hard-edged sword drawn throughout the benches, many  
 a wide buckler raised firm in hand; many one thought  
 1290 not of helmet, nor of spacious byrnie, when the alarm  
 surprized him.

The hag was in a hurry; it wanted to get out from  
 there with life, because it was discovered; promptly it  
 had seized one of the ethelings tight, and then it  
 went to fen. That man was to Hrothgar, in quality  
 of comrade, dearest of warriors between the seas,  
 mighty shield-combatant;—him the hag crushed in  
 his sleep, illustrious baron. Beowulf was not there;  
 1300 but another lodging had been assigned, after the gift-  
 giving, to the distinguished Goth. A cry was heard in  
 Heorot; the blood-sprent hag took away the well-  
 known hand; anxiety was renewed, was set up in the  
 castle. That barter was not good, which they on  
 both sides were compelled to pay for with lives of  
 friends.

Then was the venerable king, the hoary man of  
 war, in embittered mood, when he knew that his chiefest



thane no longer lived, that the man most dear to him was dead. Hastily to (the king's) bower was Beowulf <sup>1310</sup> fetched, the victorious stripling. At early dawn, he went with his warriors, the noble champion, he and his comrades, where the sapient king was waiting to be resolved, whether the Almighty will ever, after the spell of woe, bring about a change. He then marched along the flooring, the expedite man, with his little band,—hall-timbers echoed—until he accosted with words the wise lord of the Ingwines, and enquired if, according to his sincere wish, he had had a restful night. 1320

## XX.

**Hrothgar's answer to Beowulf's morning salutation ; he deploras the fate of Æschere ; and describes the haunt of the water-demons.**

Hrothgar, crown of Scyldings, uttered speech : “ Ask  
 “ not thou after welfare ! Grief is renewed for the  
 “ Danish Leeds. Æschere is dead, Yrmenlaf's elder  
 “ brother, my secretary and my counsellor ; my body-  
 “ squire, when we in battle defended our heads, what  
 “ time foot-fighters closed, boar-crests clashed ;—such  
 “ should a warrior be, a long-tried etheling, such as  
 “ Æschere was. In Heorot hath he met his death at <sup>1330</sup>  
 “ the hands of the raging destroyer ; I know not in  
 “ what direction the gruesome corpse-exulting thing  
 “ took its return-way leaving tracks of its forage. She  
 “ hath wreaked the feud, for that thou yesternight didst  
 “ quell Grendel in masterful wise with stern grapplings ;  
 “ for that he too long had wasted and destroyed my  
 “ people. He in fight succumbed with forfeiture of life ;

“and now hath come the other, a mighty ravager,  
1340 “would avenge her kin;—yea hath further aggravated  
“the feud, as may well appear to many a thane, who  
“along with his sovereign groans in spirit, in cruel  
“heart-grief; now the hand of him who was the pro-  
“moter of all your desires lies still in death.

“That I did hear say by land-owners, Leeds of mine,  
“heads of Halls, that they saw a pair of such, huge  
“mark-stalkers, keeping the moors, creatures of strange  
1350 “fashion; one of them was, according to the clearest  
“they could make out, a beldam’s likeness, the other  
“miscreated thing trod lonely tracks in man’s figure;  
“only he was huger than any other man; him in old  
“times the country folk used to call Grendel: they know  
“not about any father, whether they had any in pedigree  
“before them of mysterious goblins. They inhabit  
“unvisited land, wolf-crag, windy bluffs, the dread fen-  
1360 “track, where the mountain waterfall amid precipitous  
“gloom vanisheth beneath, flood under earth; not far  
“hence it is, reckoning by miles, that the Mere standeth,  
“and over it hang rimy groves; a wood with clenched  
“roots overshrouds the water. There may every night  
“a fearful portent be seen, fire on the flood; none so  
“wise liveth of the children of men as to know the  
“depth. Though the heath-roamer, when exhausted by  
“hounds, the hart strong in his horns, make for the  
1370 “wood-coverts, driven from afar; sooner will he resign  
“his breath, his life on the bank, sooner than he will  
“there in plunge his head. That is no comfort-  
“able place; therefrom mount up the raging waves,  
“murky to the clouds, when wind stirreth foul weather,  
“till the air thickens, the skies crack. Now is it



“again to thee alone that we look for counsel! The  
“haunt as yet thou knowest not, the dreadful place,  
“where thou mayest find the guilty felon; go for it  
“if thou dare! I will recompense thee for that warfare 1380  
“with treasure, with old stored wealth, as I did before,  
“with coiled gold, if thou comest away.”

## XXI.

Beowulf soothes the king, and gaily undertakes the new  
adventure. The cavalcade to the Mere. The look of  
it. Beowulf arms; his sword is described.

Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech: “Sorrow  
“not experienced Sire! better is it for every man that  
“he should avenge his friend, than that he should  
“greatly mourn. Every one of us must look for  
“the end of worldly life; he who has the chance  
“should achieve renown before death; that is for a  
“mighty man, when life is past, the best memorial.  
“Rouse thee, guardian of the kingdom! let us promptly 1390  
“set forth to explore the route of Grendel’s kin. I  
“vow it to thee; he shall by no means escape to  
“covert; neither in the bowels of the earth, nor in  
“the haunted wood, nor in ocean’s depth—go where  
“he will! This day have thou patience of all thy  
“woes, as I have high confidence in thy behalf.”

Up sprang then the aged (king); he thanked God,  
the mighty Lord, for what that man had spoken.  
Then Hrothgar’s horse was bridled, the crull-maned 1400  
charger. The wise monarch rode forth stately; the  
foot-force marched, of shield-bearing men. Traces

there were broadly visible along the slopes of the weald, the track (of the foe) over the grounds; right forward (the warlock) had gone, over the murky moor, it had carried off, lifeless, the most beloved of kindred thanes, of those who kept home with Hrothgar.

Then did the Scion of ethelings pass lightly over steep  
1410 stone-banks, narrow gullies, strait lonesome paths, an untravelled route, sheer bluffs, many habitations of nicors. He with few companions, practised men, went forward to explore the ground, until that he of a sudden perceived the gloomy trees overhanging the grisly rock, a joyless wood; beneath it was a standing water, dreary and troubled. All the Danes, all the friends of the Scyldings, had a shock of feeling, many athane had to  
1420 suffer; horror seized each warrior, when on that lake-cliff they came across the head of Æschere. The pool seethed with blood—the folk beheld it—with hot gore.

The horn sounded from time to time a spirited bugle-blast. The troop all sate them down; there saw they along the water many things of serpent kind, monstrous sea-snakes at their swimming gambols; and likewise on the jutting slopes nicors lying, those that in the early hours of the morning often procure disastrous going  
1430 on the sailroad; dragons and strange beasts:—they tumbled away, spitish and rage-blown; they had caught sound of the racket, the clarion's clang. The Leod of the Goths with an arrow out of his bow detached one of them from life, and from all future swimming matches; insomuch that in his vitals stood fixed the inexorable war-shaft; he in the element was the slacker at swimming, from the circumstance that death had caught him. Promptly was he on the waves with



boar-poles harpoon-armed, tightly nipped—barred of his tricks—and landed on the point, the prodigious 1440 wave-tosser;—the men beheld the grisly goblin.

Beowulf geared himself in knightly armour; in no wise was he anxious for his life; now must the war-byrnie, hand-woven, spacious and decorated, make trial of swimming; the byrnie which knew to protect the body, that his breast, his life, might not be scathed by the grip of battle, the spiteful clutch of the furious one. Moreover the white helmet guarded his head, the helmet that was to plunge into the depths of the pool, to face buffeting waters, with all its decoration of 1450 silver, encircled with princely wreathings, as a weapon-smith in ancient days wrought it, wonderfully executed it, set it round with boar figures, so that never might brand nor war-blades make any impression upon it.

That moreover was not the least important of helps to his valour, which Hrothgar's orator lent to him at his need;—the name of that hafted blade was Hrunting, it was preeminently one of old heirlooms;—the edge was iron, mottled with poison-twigs, hardened 1460 with battle-gore; never had it in conflict proved false to any man who brandished it with hands, such man as durst adventure on paths of terror, where nations meet as foes; that was not the first occasion that it had been required to discharge heroic work. Manifestly Ecglaf's son, of doughty puissance, remembered not what he had recently uttered when flushed with wine, seeing now he made loan of that weapon to a rarer sword-gallant;—for himself he durst not adventure his life among the turmoil of waves, to fulfil mastery;— 1470 there he fell short of glory, of high achievement. It

was not so with the other, when he had harnessed him for combat.

## XXII.

Beowulf's nuncupatory will. He plunges into the abyss, and meets the troll-wife. The battle begins.

Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech : " Bethink  
 " thee now, great son of Healfdene, sapient monarch,  
 " now I am ready to start, oh thou gold-friend of men,  
 " what we two lately talked of ;—If I in thy service  
 " had to quit life, that thou to me wouldest ever be,  
 1480 " after my departure, in the place of a father ;—be thou  
 " protector to my kindred thanes, my familiar comrades,  
 " if Hild should take me ; in such a case do thou,  
 " beloved Hrothgar, forward the presents which thou  
 " hast given me, to Hygelac. So will the Master of  
 " the Goths be able to understand by that gold,  
 " Hrethel's son will be able to see for himself when he  
 " gazeth upon that treasure, that I had found a boun-  
 " tifully good distributor of jewels, and was in luck  
 " while my fortune lasted. And do thou let Unferth  
 " have the ancient heir-loom, the curious damasked  
 1490 " sword ; let the far-famed man have Hardedge ; I will  
 " with Hrunting achieve for myself renown, or death  
 " shall take me."

After these words the leed of the Weder-Goths dashed bravely off, would await no answer ;—the eddying flood engulphed the warrior. It was then a main while of the day ere he could reach the country at the bottom.

Soon was that perceived by the blood-thirsty creature, grim and greedy, which for a hundred seasons



had kept the watery region, that one of the children of men was exploring from above the habitation of goblins. 1500 It made a grab then towards him; it caught the brave man with grisly talons; nevertheless it pierced not to wound the wholeness of his body; ring-mail outside fenced him about, insomuch that the hag could not get through that jacket of service, well-knit limb-sark, with its loathsome fingers. Then did the she-wolf of the lake, when she came to the bottom, bear the jewelled prince to her mansion, so that he had no power at all—courage enough he had—to wield his weapons; but so many monsters harassed him in swimming, many 1510 a water-beast with hostile tusks battered his war-sark, the brigands were in pursuit.

Then did the eorl perceive that he was in some strange abysmal hall, where no water at all molested him, nor could the violence of the flood touch him, being kept off by the roofed hall; firelight he saw, an eerie lustre, shining bright. Then the hero knew it was the she-wolf of the abyss, the mighty carline of the Mere;—onset he delivered with slaughter-bill, his 1520 hand delayed not the stroke, so that about her head the costly blade resounded a greedy war-song. Then did the visitor discover that the battle-gleamer would not bite, not scathe life, but the edge failed the master at need; it had in times past supported many encounters, had often cleft helmet, war-harness of the doomed;—that was the first time for the honoured treasure, that its fame broke down. Again he was for action, in courage never faltering, mindful of ex- 1530 ploits, Hygelac's kinsman. Away did the wrathful combatant then fling the damascened blade cunningly

bedizened, insomuch that it lay along on the earth, stark and steel-edged ; he trusted to his strength, the hand-grip of his might.

So it behoves a man to act, when he in battle thinks to attain enduring PRAISE ;—he will not be caring about his life.

Then did the Leed of the warlike Goths—nought recked he of deadly peril—seize Grendel's dam by the shoulder ; then did the man valiant in fight, as he was  
1540 full of rage, sway his deadly adversary so that she sank on the pavement. The hag swiftly paid him back reprisal with fell grapplings, and closed in upon him :—then staggered he with spirits exhausted, he the strongest of warriors, the champion-soldier, insomuch that he fell prostrate. Then did the hag sit upon the visitant of her hall, and drew her knife, broad and brown-edged ; would revenge her bairn, her only offspring. About his shoulder lay the breast-net interlaced ; that fenced his life ; against point and against edge it barred the entrance.

1550 Then had the son of Ecgtheow, the champion of the Goths, miscarried under the vast profound, had not his campaigning byrnie, his hard war-net, afforded help ;—and holy God controlled the victory, the Lord of providence, the heavenly Ruler, he determined it aright, and that with ease ;—presently he again stood erect on his feet.



## XXIII.

Beowulf finishes the business. The king's party give him up, and go home. Beowulf's comrades remain on the cliff. Fidelity rewarded. An after-dinner surprize.

Then saw he among the armour a monumental cutlass, an old eotenish sword, of edge effective, a trophy of warriors ;—that was the very pride of weapons, only then it was huger than any other man could 1560 bear to the battle-game ; it was good and gallant, handiwork of giants. Then did he, the champion of the Scyldings, grasp Fetelhilt ; exasperate and greedy of fight he drew the jewelled arm ; despairing of his life, he smote in his fury ; insomuch that the hard steel caught her by the neck, broke through the bone-rings, the bill sped all through the doomed flesh-jacket ;—she dropped on the pavement ; the sword was gory ; the lad was fain of his work.

The glimmer flashed up, light filled the place, even 1570 as when from heaven serenely shineth the candle of the firmament. He scanned the apartment with his eye, then took his way along by the wall ; stubborn the thane of Hygelac swung his weapon aloft by the hilt, fierce and aggressive. That blade was not flung away by the hero, but he was forthwith minded to repay Grendel the many fatal assaults he had wrought on the west Danes oftener far than a single once, when he slew 1580 Hrothgar's hearth-comrades in their slumber ; sleeping men of the Danish folk he devoured fifteen, and an equal number he conveyed away, hideous spoil. He had paid him his recompense for that, the furious

champion had ; insomuch that he now beheld him at rest, weary of war, even Grendel he saw lying, bereft of life, so deadly for him had erst the conflict at Heorot been. The carcass gaped wide, when it after death  
1590 received the blow, the hard sword-slash ; then did he cut the head from off him.

Forthwith was that perceived by the observant men who with Hrothgar were watching over the water, that the wave-plash was all turbid, the surf was tinged with blood : the men of grizzled locks, the old men, spake together about the brave man, how that they expected not the Etheling back again, did not expect that he would come radiant with victory to seek the illustrious prince ; inasmuch as the more part were of opinion, that the she-wolf of the mere had torn him in pieces.

1600 Then came the ninth hour of the day. The impetuous Scyldings quitted the bluff ; the gold-friend of men took his departure homeward thence. The foreigners sate fast, sick at heart, and upon the pool they gazed ; they wished and did not expect, that they might ever get sight of their lord and captain in the body.

Then did that sword begin—under spilth of blood in fearful clots—the war-bill began to waste away ;—that was a marvellous thing that it melted all away, likest to ice when the Father dissolveth the rigour of frost and  
1610 unwindeth the ropes of the torrent, he who hath control of times and seasons ; that is the true Governor.

The Leed of the Weder-Goths took not of rare possessions in those halls—though he saw many there—aught more than the head, and with it the



hilt that was metal-spangled; the sword had already melted away, the decorated weapon had burnt up;—so fiercely hot was that blood, and so venomous the strange goblin which had perished there in that habitation.

Soon was he swimming, he who erst had strugglingly encountered the onset of furious beasts; up through the water he dived; the wave-depths were all purified, 1620 spacious haunts; now that the goblin had quitted life, and this transitory scene.

Then came he to land, the crown of the men from over the sea, bravely swimming;—he exulted in his lake-spoil, in the mighty burthen which he had with him. Then went they to meet him, they thanked God, the valiant band of thanes, they rejoiced over their captain, for that they had been so happy as to get sight of him whole and sound. Then was from the ardent hero his helmet and byrnie promptly slackened:—sullenly the 1630 Mere subsided, water under welkin, dusk with battle-gore.

Forth thence they fared upon the tracks of their (former) march, fain in their souls, they passed over the country, and along the public highways: men of kingly courage bore the head-piece away from the Mere-cliff, toilsomely for every one of them: of the lusty and stalwart fellows four were required to convey with much ado on the gory pole the head of Grendel to the gold-hall; (and so they went) till that unexpectedly to 1640 Hall the brave adventurers arrived, fourteen of Goths marching; their Captain withal, glorious in their midst, trod the grounds of the mead-hall. Then did the Commander of the thanes proceed to enter, deed-keen man, adorned with glory, warlike hero, to accost Hrothgar:

then was Grendel's head borne by the hair into the hall  
 where men drank ;—startling for the nobles and the  
 1650 lady withal ; a visage indescribable did men behold.

## XXIIII.

Beowulf reports his experience to Hrothgar, and gives  
 him the wondrous hilt, which is examined and  
 described. Hrothgar's paternal discourse.

Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech : “ Lo and  
 “ behold ! we unto thee, oh son of Healfdene, Leed of  
 “ the Scyldings, have joyfully brought these Mere-spoils  
 “ which thou here lookest on, in token of achievement !  
 “ Not easily did I fight it through with life : in battle  
 “ under water I had hardly faced out the task, well-nigh  
 “ had the struggle failed, only that God shielded me. I  
 1660 “ could not in conflict accomplish aught with Hrunting,  
 “ though that be a good weapon ; but the Ruler of men  
 “ vouchsafed to me that I on the wall saw smilingly  
 “ hanging an old sword of huge size—oftenest hath He  
 “ guided men when they have no other friend—insomuch  
 “ that I grasped at that weapon. Then smote I in  
 “ that campaign—occasion favouring me—the keepers of  
 “ the house. Then did that battle-bill consume away,  
 “ that twisted piece, by reason of that blood which  
 “ gushed forth, hottest of battle-gore ; I brought away  
 “ from the enemy that hilt as a trophy ; I avenged the  
 1670 “ atrocities, the death-agony of Danes, as it was meet.  
 “ Accordingly I promise it to thee that thou in Heorot  
 “ mayest sleep free from care with the regiment of thy  
 “ troopers ; and so may everythane of thy Leeds, of the  
 “ seniority and of the juniority, for that thou needest  
 “ not on their account apprehend danger, O chief of



“Scyldings, in that quarter, life-bale to warriors ; as  
“erewhile thou diddest.”

Then was the gilded hilt given to the veteran soldier, the hoary leader in battle, given into his hand, ancient workmanship of giants ; it passed, after the demons 1680 were quelled, into the possession of the prince of the Danes, a work of mystic smiths ; and so when the atrocious creature, God’s enemy, murder-criminous, left this world, and his mother too, it went into the possession of the best of worldly kings between the seas, of all that ever in Scania distributed wealth.

Hrothgar uttered speech ;—he surveyed the hilt, the old relic ; upon it was written the origin of the primæval quarrel, what time the flood, the rushing ocean, destroyed the giants’ brood ; they got for them- 1690 selves a bitter fate ; that was a tribe estranged from the Eternal Captain, to them did the Ruler assign final retribution with whelming water. Likewise on the mounting of sheer gold there was with rune-staves rightly inscribed, set down, and said, for whom that sword had erst been wrought, best of steelly fabrics, with wreathen hilt, and dragon ornament.

Then did the wise son of Healfdene utter speech— all held their peace— : “That, lo ! may a man say, a 1700  
“man who promoteth truth and right among folk,—he  
“remembereth all long ago, the old housemaster—  
“that this eorl was born superior ! The fame is  
“spread through distant parts, my friend Beowulf, the  
“fame of thee over every nation. Withal thou dost  
“carry it modestly, thy prowess with discretion of mind.  
“I shall make good to thee my plighted love, according  
“as was before said betwixt us two ; thou art destined

“to prove a comfort sure and lasting to thy Leeds, a  
 “help to mankind.

1710 “Heremod did not prove so to the descendants of  
 “Ecgwela, to the honourable Scyldings; he waxed  
 “great not for their pleasure, but for mortal fray and  
 “for death-blows to the Danish Leeds; he in his un-  
 “governed mood crushed his boon companions, the  
 “squires of his body; until that at last he wandered  
 “forth alone, the illustrious monarch, away from human  
 “society; notwithstanding that the mighty God had  
 “with the attractions of strength, with puissance,  
 “exalted him, promoted him, above all men. Never-  
 “theless in his soul there grew a blood-thirsty passion;  
 1720 “—far was he from giving rings to the Danes accord-  
 “ing to merit; he continued estranged from social joy,  
 “so that he suffered the penalty of that outrage in the  
 “settled disaffection of his people.

“Do thou take warning by that; understand the  
 “ornament of man! It is about thee that I  
 “being old in years and experience have told  
 “this tale.

“Wonderful it is to tell, how the mighty God with  
 “large intelligence dispenses understanding to mankind,  
 “dispenses position and prowess—he holds the dis-  
 “position of all things. Sometimes he lets the purpose  
 “of a man of noble race turn towards possession, he  
 1730 “giveth to him earthly joy on his estate, to hold the  
 “citadel of men, he assigns to him regions of the world  
 “so extensive, a realm so wide, that he in his unwisdom  
 “is not able to carry his thought to the end of it; he  
 “dwelleth in prosperity, not anything annoys him, not  
 “sickness nor age nor carking care darkens his spirits,



“no quarrel on any side, no feud appears ; but all the  
 “world moves to his mind, he knows not reverse.

## XXV.

The conclusion of Hrothgar's discourse. More feast-  
 ing ;—and then came bed-time, for which the herò had  
 huge desire. Beowulf slept till the voice of the bird  
 proclaimed sunrise. Preparing to return home, he  
 restores Hrunting to Unferth courteously.

“Until at length within the man himself something 1740  
 “of arrogancy grows and develops ; then sleepeth the  
 “guardian, the soul's keeper ; it is too fast that sleep,  
 “awfully profound, the assassin is very nigh, he who  
 “from his arrow-bow malignantly shooteth. Then is  
 “he, helmeted man, smitten in the breast with a  
 “bitter shaft : he cannot defend himself from the  
 “crooked exorbitant counsels of the damnèd sprite ; he  
 “fancies that it is too little, all that he has so long  
 “enjoyed ; he is covetous, and malignant ; glorieth  
 “not in the pomp of bestowing gilded decorations ; and 1750  
 “he forgetteth the ulterior consequences ; he too lightly  
 “considers how that God the Dispenser of glory had  
 “erewhile given him the post of dignity. Then at the  
 “end of the chapter it returns to this, that the body  
 “shrunk falls away, the outgoing life drops ;—another  
 “fills his room, one who ungrudgingly distributes  
 “treasure, the eorl's old accumulations ;—timid pru-  
 “dence he despises.

“Guard thee against the fatal grudge, beloved  
 “Beowulf, youth most excellent, and choose for thee  
 “the better course, enduring counsels ! incline not to 1760

“arrogancy, thou mighty champion! Now is thy  
 “strength in full bloom for one while; eftsoons it will  
 “happen that sickness or sword will bereave thee of  
 “puissance;—either clutch of fire or whelm of flood,  
 “either assault of knife or flight of javelin, either  
 “wretched eld or glance of eyes, will mar and darken  
 “all; without more ado it will come to pass that death  
 “will subdue thee, thou Captain of men!

1770 “For example I myself during fifty years ruled  
 “beneath the welkin over the jewelled Danes, and I  
 “by valour made them secure against many a nation  
 “throughout this world with spears and swords,  
 “insomuch that I had no apprehension of any rival  
 “under the circuit of the sky. When lo! in my  
 “ancestral seat there came a change over all that;—  
 “distress where mirth was before, as soon as Grendel,  
 “the old adversary, became an inmate of mine; because  
 “of that visitation I continually carried great anxiety  
 “at heart. Thanks therefore be to the Governor, the  
 “Eternal Captain, for that which I have lived to see,  
 1780 “that I, the old tribulation past, upon that severed,  
 “that bloody headpiece, with mine eyes do gaze!

“Go now to settle, share the festive joy, crowned  
 “with honours of war! Thou and I must have dealings  
 “together in many many treasures, when to-morrow  
 “comes.”

The Goth was glad of mood; he moved promptly off,  
 drawing to settle, as the sapient king ordained him.  
 Then was again as before, to the gallant warriors, to  
 1790 the company in hall, fair banquet served afresh.

Night's covering grew dim, dark over the banded  
 men. Uprose all the seniors:—it was that the gray



haired king, the venerable Scylding, was minded to draw to his bed. Vastly well did the Goth, the illustrious warrior, like the thought of repose; promptly was he, now weary of adventure, the man of far country, marshalled forth by the chamberlain, one who with meet ceremony supplied all the wants of a gentleman, such things as in that day the lords of the main required to have.

So the great-hearted hero rested him;—high in air loomed the edifice, wide-spanning and gold-<sup>1800</sup>gleaming:—the stranger slept within, until the black raven announced heaven's glory with a blithe heart. Then came bright light striding over shadow; fiends scampered off. The ethelings were ready dight to fare back to their Leeds;—the magnanimous visitor was minded to take ship, for a voyage far away.

Then did the hero bid the son of Ecglaf bear away Hrunting, bade him take his sword, beloved weapon; said his thanks for the loan; quoth that<sup>4</sup> he counted that <sup>1810</sup>war-mate a good one, war-serviceable; with his words did not blame the faulchion's edge; that was a high-souled lad!

And when the departing warriors were equipped in harness, the Etheling honoured by the Danes went up to the dais, where the other warlike hero was;—he greeted Hrothgar.

## XXVI.

**Beowulf's parting interview with Hrothgar, who is moved to tears.**

Beowulf son of Ecgtheow uttered speech:—"Now we  
"sea-voyagers wish to say, we who have come from far,

- 1820 "that we are purposing to go to Hygelac. Here we  
"have been well entertained to our satisfaction; thou  
"hast been to us very generous. If I therefore may  
"by any means upon earth undertake for thy further  
"gratification, O Captain of men, labours of war  
"beyond what I have yet done, I shall be ready  
"promptly. If they bring me word over the circuit of  
"the floods that neighbours press thee with alarm as  
"whilome thy haters did, I will bring thee a thousand  
1830 "thanes, warriors to help thee. I can undertake for  
"Hygelac, captain of the Goths, young though he be,  
"shepherd of people, that he will forward me by words  
"and by works, so that I may do high service to thee,  
"and for thy support bring a forest of spears, a mighty  
"subsidy, when thou shalt have need of men:—if  
"moreover Hrethric, princely child, is in treaty for  
"admission at the courts of the Goths, he may there  
"find many friends; foreign countries are best visited  
"by him who is of high worth in himself."
- 1840 Hrothgar bespake him in answer, "These con-  
"siderate words hath the Allwise Lord put into thy  
"mind; never heard I a man so young in life speak  
"more to purpose; thou art strong in might and ripe  
"in understanding; wise in discourse of speech. I  
"count it likely, if it cometh to pass that the spear, the  
"grim dispatch of battle, taketh away Hrethel's off-  
"spring, if ailing or iron taketh thy chieftain, the  
"shepherd of the people, and thou hast thy life, that  
1850 "the sea-faring Goths have not any thy better to choose  
"for king, for treasurer of warriors, if thou art willing  
"to hold the realm of thy kinsfolk. To me thy disposi-  
"tion is well-liking more and more, beloved Beowulf;



“thou hast achieved, that the nations—Gothic leeds and  
“spear-bearing Danes—shall have mutual friendship,  
“and strife shall cease, the hostile surprises whence  
“they suffered erewhile ;—there shall be, while I rule the  
“wide realm, a community of treasure : many friends 1860  
“shall greet one another with gifts across the bath of  
“the gannet ; the ringèd ship shall bring over ocean  
“presents and tokens of love. I know the people to  
“be equally as towards foe so towards friend constant  
“in mind, either way irreproachable, in olden wise.”

Then did the Shelter of warriors, the son of Halfdene,  
further give into his possession twelve hoarded jewels ;  
he bade him go with the presents visit his own people  
in comfort, and soon come back again. Then did the 1870  
king of noble ancestry, the chief of the Scyldings, kiss  
the incomparable thane and clasp him by the neck ; tears  
from him fell, the greyhaired man ; forecast was both  
ways to the man of old experience, but one way stronger  
than the other, namely, that they might never meet  
again, proud men in the assembly. To him the man  
was so dear, that he could not restrain the passion of  
his breast, but deep in the affections of his soul a  
secret longing after the beloved man stemmed the  
current of his blood. 1880

Beowulf departing thence, a warrior gold-bedight,  
trode the grassy earth conscious of wealth :—the sea-  
goer, which was riding at anchor, awaited his owner  
and lord. Then upon the march was the liberality  
of Hrothgar often praised ; that was a king, every  
way without reproach ; until old age had bereft him  
of the vantage of his prowess,—him who had often  
been a terror to many.

## XXVII.

The warden of the port, his respectful demeanour.

How Beowulf recompensed the care of the boat-warden. The home-bound voyage. Beowulf's progress to Hygelac's mansion. Talk by the way :—the domestic felicity of that young king : his consort Hygd very different from Thrytho. Offa and his son Eomær.

So the troop of gallant bachelors came to the water ;  
 1890 they wore ring-armour, netted limb-sarks. The land-warden observed the return-march of the eorlas, just as he had done before ;—not with suspicion from the peak of the cliff did he greet the visitors, but he rode towards them ; he said to the Leeds of the Wederas that the bright-mailed explorers came welcome to their ships. Then was on the beach the roomy sea-boat laden with war-harness, the ring-prowed ship with horses and treasures ; the mast rose high over wealth from Hrothgar's hoard.

1900 He to the boat-warden presented a gold-bound sword, insomuch that ever after he was on the mead-bench the more worshipful by reason of that decoration, that sword of pedigree.

[The Gothic captain with his band of warriors] betook him to ship, ploughing deep water ; the Danes' land he quitted. Then was by the mast a manner of sea-garment, a sail with sheet made fast ; the sea-timber hummed. There did the wind over the billows not baffle the wave-floater of her course ; the sea-goer marched, scudded with foamy throat forward over  
 1910 the swell, with gorgeous prow over the briny currents,



till they were able to espy the Gothic cliffs, familiar headlands. The keel grated up ashore, with way on her from the wind; she stood on land. Quickly was the hythe-warden ready at the strand, he who already for a long time expectant at the water's edge had eyed the craft of the beloved men; he bound to the shore the wide-bosomed ship with anchor-cables fast, lest the violence of the waves might snatch the winsome craft away from them. Then did he give orders to <sup>1920</sup> carry ashore the princely riches, jewels and wrought gold; not far thence had he to go to find the dispenser of wealth;—"Hygelac the son of Hrēthel dwelleth "there at court, himself with his peers, nigh unto the "sea-wall;"—the building was magnificent, the king was majestical, high in his hall; Hygd was very young, wise, of good discretion, though she had experienced few winters in the castle, the daughter of Hæreth; she was howsoever not mean-spirited, nor too grudging of <sup>1930</sup> gifts, of stored possessions, to the Leeds of the Goths.

Thrytho displayed a moody pride, the haughty queen of the people, terrible savagery; no brave man durst venture on that, no one of favourite courtiers, save her own consort, that he openly gazed at her with his eyes; but he might reckon on bands of destruction being prepared for him, woven by hand; in quick succession after arrest was the knife engaged, that the instrument of outrage might settle it, making assassina- <sup>1940</sup> tion famous. Such is not a queenly guise, for a lady to practise, although she be peerless; that a peace-weaver should, upon a false pretence of injury, assail the life of a liege man. However, that was checked by the kinsman of Heming:—those who drink at the

ale told an altered story, namely, that she did less of  
 leed-quelling, of personal revenges, from the moment  
 when she was given gold-adorned to the young cham-  
 pion, the noble and the brave ; as soon as she had by  
 1950 her father's counsel voyaged over the fallow flood to  
 seek Offa's hall ; there, ever since, she had, as long as  
 she lived in her royal state, been famed for kindness, and  
 had well used life's opportunities ; had held high love to  
 the commander of men, who was of all mankind, my  
 story tells, the most excellent between the seas the  
 wide world over ; forasmuch as Offa was, the spear-  
 keen man, for graces and war-feats widely celebrated ;  
 1960 with wisdom he ruled his ancestral home ; whence  
 Eomær was born for people's aid, kinsman of Heming,  
 grandson of Garmund, and a skilful campaigner.

## XXVIII.

The meeting of Beowulf and Hygelac. Hygelac's  
 enquiries. Beowulf's report.

So marched the valiant man, with his band of com-  
 rades ; he went along the strand treading the sea-laved  
 floor, the spacious foreshores. The world's candle  
 shone, the sun in his course shone from the South ;  
 —they pursued their journey, with mighty pace they  
 covered the ground, to where report said that the  
 Shelter of warriors, the banesman of Ongentheow, the  
 war-king young and brave, was in his towers distributing  
 1970 rings.

Beowulf's arrival was promptly announced to Hygelac,  
 how that there in the precincts the Shelter of fighters,  
 his shield-companion, was coming alive, sound from  
 battle-play, and marching to court. Quickly was



cleared, as the ruler commanded, for the travellers, the interior of the hall.

He sate then by the king himself, he who had escaped the struggle, kinsman by kinsman, soon as his liege lord with loud accost had greeted his loyal man with generous 1980 words. With bombards of mead moved about that hall Hæreth's daughter ; she loved the folk, she bore the soothing bowl to the hands of the warriors.

Then began Hygelac graciously to question his bench-fellow in that lofty hall—curiosity urged him—what were the adventures of the Goths at sea :—“ How befell  
 “you on your voyage, beloved Beowulf, when thou  
 “suddenly resolvedst to seek combat far away over  
 “salt water, battle at Heorot? But didst thou for 1990  
 “Hrothgar, for the mighty suzerain, at all mend the  
 “wide-known woe? I seethed with anxiety therefor,  
 “with gushings of sorrow ; I mistrusted the adventure  
 “for a man so dear ; I long besought thee, that thou  
 “wouldest have no dealings with the destructive mon-  
 “ster, that thou wouldst let the Southron Danes  
 “themselves dispose their quarrel with Grendel. To  
 “God I offer thanks, for that I have been permitted to  
 “behold thee safe and sound.”

Then did Beowulf son of Ecgtheow utter speech ;  
 “That is no secret, Hygelac my liege, the grand meet- 2000  
 “ing (is known) to numbers of men, what manner of  
 “tournament I and Grendel had upon that field, where  
 “he many a time had wrought sorrow for the conquer-  
 “ing Scyldings, desperate ignominy ;—I avenged it all,  
 “so that not any kin of Grendel upon earth hath cause  
 “to brag of that twilight crash, not he of the detested  
 “race that longest liveth among the fens.

2010 "At my first arrival there, I went to the ring-hall to  
 "greet Hrothgar; promptly did the mighty successor  
 "of Healfdene, when he knew my purpose, assign me a  
 "settle by the side of his own son. The company was  
 "joyous;—never in my life did I see under heaven's  
 "vault guests in hall more social over mead. At one  
 "time the lofty queen, bond of peace to the nations,  
 "passed down the length of the hall, kept the young  
 "lads to their duty;—often would she bestow on some  
 "guest a wreathen decoration before she went to settle.  
 2020 "At another time before the seniors did Hrothgar's  
 "daughter bear the ale-flagon from end to end of  
 "the nobles; her I heard the hall-guests name  
 "Freaware, while she presented to the heroes the  
 "silver-studded vessel; she, the young, the gold-dight,  
 "was promised to the gay son of Froda; so hath it  
 "pleased the Friend of the Scyldings, that he through  
 "that woman should compose great contentions, san-  
 "guinary feuds. Often and not seldom anywhere,  
 2030 "after Leed-slaughter, it is but a little while the  
 "baneful spear reposes, good though the bride may  
 "be!"

## [XXIX.]

\* \* \* \* \*  
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[XXX.<sup>1</sup>]

## Continuation of Beowulf's Report to Hygelac.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \* "Well may it mislike the ruler of the  
 "Heathobards and everythane of that nobility, when  
 "he with the lady goeth into Hall, a prince of the  
 "Danes amidst the high company; upon him do  
 "glisten heirlooms of their ancestors, hard and ringed  
 "harness, (once) Heathobardic treasure, so long as they  
 "could retain the mastery of those weapons, until they  
 "in an unlucky hour led to that buckler-play their dear 2040  
 "comrades, and their own lives. Then saith one at the  
 "beer, one who observes them both, an old lance-  
 "fighter, one who fully remembers the spear-quelling  
 "of the men—bitter is the spirit within him;—sore  
 "at heart he beginneth to practise upon a young  
 "champion's feelings through the passions of his  
 "breast, to awaken war-fury; and that word he  
 "saith:—

'Canst thou, my friend, recognize the blade, the  
 'precious steel, which thy father carried into battle, 2050

<sup>1</sup> Neither XXIX nor XXX are marked in the manuscript, and how Thorpe interpreted these appearances may be seen by his note which I append:—"Here a part of the MS. is wanting, consisting of the remainder of Canto XXVIII, the whole of XXIX, and the beginning of XXX." The absence of the Head-Numbers XXIX and XXX, together with the present unsatisfactory commencement of XXX, seem to justify two-thirds of this statement; but it is not so clear why any of XXVIII should be thought missing. Perhaps it may be easier to imagine a scribe blundering from the midst of one solid paragraph into another, rather than that he should err at the end of a Canto, which is a Station that fixes the attention. But against Thorpe's view is the fact that the story does not seem correspondingly advanced.

‘wearing his helmet for the last time where the Danes  
 ‘slew him,—when the indemnity fell through after the  
 ‘carnage of men,—and the masters of the battle-field  
 ‘were the fiery Scyldings? Now here a boy of one or  
 ‘other of those banesmen, proud of the spoils, walketh  
 ‘our hall, boasteth of the slaughter, and he weareth the  
 ‘treasure, of which thou by right shouldst be the  
 ‘master!’

“So urges he and eggs him on at every turn with  
 “galling words, until the moment comes, that for his  
 2060 “father’s deeds the lady’s thane sleepeth blood-spat-  
 “tered after the falchion’s bite, life-doomed;—the other  
 “gets him thence away alive; knows his way well  
 “enough over land. By and bye the sworn oaths of  
 “the warriors on either side will be broken; when  
 “in Ingeld’s mind rankle warlike purposes, and his  
 “domestic affections grow cooler amidst agitations of  
 “care. Therefore I esteem not the loyalty of the  
 “Heathobards, nor the matter of the high alliance  
 “towards the Danes sincere, the friendship firm.

2070 “I must resume and tell about Grendel again, that  
 “thou mayest fully know, O wealth-distributor, how far  
 “was carried the grapple of combatants. After that  
 “heaven’s jewel had passed over the lands away, the  
 “monster came in fury, grisly with nocturnal ravin,  
 “to visit us, where we in good heart were guarding  
 “the hall;—there was the battle fatal to Hondscio,  
 “life-bale to the death-doomed; he was the first to fall,  
 “a belted champion; Grendel killed him, my brave  
 2080 “cousin and thane, with his jaw; the beloved man’s  
 “body he entirely devoured.

“But for all that, none the readier was he to depart



“from that gold-hall empty-handed, the bloody-toothed  
“assassin of murderous mind ; but confident in strength  
“he made trial of me, grasped with ready hand. The  
“glove hanged, huge, and of foul aspect, strengthened  
“with intricate bands, it was mysteriously geared with  
“devilish machinations and dragon’s fells ; therein was  
“he minded to have put inoffensive me—the ferocious 2090  
“ruffian—with many others ; he could not so manage it,  
“when I in rage had stood upright. Too long it is to  
“relate, how I repaid the leed-queller for every evil re-  
“quital due ;—there did I, my prince, honour thy leeds  
“by my works. He escaped and got away ; little while  
“did he enjoy the delights of life ;—at any rate, his  
“right hand remained behind in Heorot as a mark  
“of his track, and he in abject plight, in woeful mood,  
“tottered from that place down to the bottom of the 2100  
“mere.

“The Friend of the Scyldings largely rewarded  
“me for that encounter with beaten gold and many  
“treasures, when the morrow had come and we had  
“taken our seats at the banquet. There was song and  
“glee ; the venerable Scylding, a large enquirer, told  
“tales of long ago ; now a gallant warrior would waken  
“the charm of the harp, striking the game-wood ; now  
“would one tell a tale true and piteous ; now a strange  
“story circumstantially related by the magnanimous 2110  
“king. At another time by and bye one in the fetters  
“of eld, an aged veteran, would begin regretting the  
“time of youth, of vigour for battle ; his breast within  
“him swelled, as the old man revived many memories.  
“So we there in that place the live-long day took our  
“delight, until that another night arrived to men.

“ Eftsoon there was one eager for vengeance, Gren-  
 “ del’s mother ; she journeyed woeful ; her son by  
 2120 “ death was taken off, by the hostility of the Wederas.  
 “ The awful mere-wife revenged her bairn, quelled a  
 “ baron furiously ; there was Æschere, the experi-  
 “ enced councillor, bereaved of life ; nothing could they  
 “ do for him when morning came ; the Danish people  
 “ could not consume the lifeless man with fire, could  
 “ not lay the beloved man on the funeral pile ; she had  
 “ borne away the body in fiendish clutches, under the  
 “ mountain waterfall. Of those griefs, which had long  
 2130 “ harassed the sovereign, that was the bitterest to  
 “ Hrothgar. Then did the chieftain in despairing  
 “ mood entreat me—with thy leave—that I in the rush  
 “ of waters would exert valour, hazard life, achieve  
 “ renown ; he promised me meed. I then, as it is  
 “ widely known, found the grim and grisly keeper of  
 “ the whirl-pool’s abyss. There we two for a while had  
 “ equal battle. The water gurgled with blood, and I  
 “ in that abysmal dwelling shore off the head of  
 2140 “ Grendel’s mother with sword of might ; not easily  
 “ came I thence away with my life ; I was not then  
 “ fated to die as yet, but upon me did the Shelter of  
 “ heroes, the son of Healfdene, gratefully bestow foison  
 “ of treasures.

## XXXI.

Beowulf concludes his report ; and then he renders up  
 to Hygelac, and to the queen, his gifts and rewards.  
 Beowulf is promoted. Ultimately he reigned.

“ So the imperial king lived in good customs ;—by no  
 “ means had I missed the rewards, the meed of my



“achievement, but he gave me precious things, did  
“Healfdene’s son, into my own disposal; them will I  
“render unto thee, noble king, as a grateful presenta-  
“tion. Surely all my satisfactions are along of thee; 2150  
“I have hardly any kinsman in chief, save thee,  
“O Hygelac.”

Then he ordered to bring in a boar head-crest, a battle-towering helmet, a gray mail-coat, a gallant cutlass; and he thereafter descanted:—“This battle-  
“suit did Hrothgar, sapient prince, give to me, and with  
“express word he bade, that I the pedigree thereof  
“should report to thee;—he said that king Hiorogâr,  
“lord of the Scyldings, had it for a long while; nathless  
“he would not give to his own son, the keen Heoro- 2160  
“ward, though he was loyal to him, this breast-apparel.  
“Enjoy all well!”

I heard that upon those ornaments four horses, exactly alike, followed close, apple-fallow; he to him made grateful presentation of horses and of treasures. So should a kinsman do, and not by any means spread the deceitful net for his fellow, with hidden artifice contrive death for a comrade. To Hygelac, bold in battle, his nephew was thoroughly loyal, and either to 2170 other studious of kindnesses.

I heard that he presented the carcanet to Hygd, the curiously wrought wonderful jewel, the one that Wealhtheow, daughter of a prince, had given to him; and therewithal three palfreys elegant and saddle-dight;—from that time was her breast decorated upon collar-bestowing occasions.

So Ecgtheow’s son increased in confidence, a man known in wars, in valiant deeds; he conducted him-

self with discretion ; never did he smite his hearth-  
2180 fellows in their cups ; his was no ruffian soul, but he of  
all mankind most prudently controlled the mighty talent  
that God had given him, like a brave soldier. Little  
esteemed he had been for a long time, as the children  
of the Goths had not counted him good for anything,  
nor had the Captain of hosts been pleased to make him  
of much dignity at the mead-bench ; very often they said  
that he was slack, an unpromising prince ;—reversal of  
every indignity came to the man when he was radiant  
with glory.

2190 Then commanded the Shelter of warriors, the battle-  
famed king, to fetch-in Hrethel's heir-loom, mounted  
with gold ;—there was not among the Goths at that  
time a treasure of more distinction in the way of a  
sword ;—that he laid upon Beowulf's bosom, and  
conferred upon him seven thousands, mansion,  
and seat of authority.

Both of them alike possessed in that community  
hereditary land, a family estate ; but the empery was  
rather to the other, who in that respect had the pre-  
2200 eminence. By and bye that accrued, in process of  
days, through violence of war, when Hygelac had fallen,  
and instruments of war despite shield and buckler had  
proved fatal to Heardred ; what time the tough war-  
wolves, the bellicose Scylfings, had come to look him  
in the face among his battalions, and had humbled  
from his raids the nephew of Hereric.

Consequently the broad realm came to the hand of  
Beowulf ; he governed well fifty winters—that was  
2210 a venerable king, an old æthel-warden—until one  
began in dark nights, even a dragon, to have mastery ;



one that on a high heath kept a hoard, a steep stone-castle; a path lay beneath, unfrequented by people. Therewithin had gone some man or other, [deftly] he took of the heathen hoard, [took a thing] glistening with precious metal;—that he afterwards [rued], that he had tricked the horrid keeper while sleeping, with thievish dexterity . . . . . that he was <sup>2220</sup> infuriate.

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## THE THIRD PART.

### XXXII.

How it happened that the man robbed the Dragon's hoard. That treasure was the accumulated store of ancient and forgotten warriors. The Dragon prepares revenge. The beginning of the fatal war.

Not of set purpose nor by his own free choice had he visited the dragon's hoard, he who brought sore trouble on himself; but for dire necessity had he, the slave of some one or other of the sons of men, fled from outrageous stripes a houseless wretch, and into that place had blundered like a man in guilty terror. [*Here four (or five) mutilated lines seem to say that the fugitive, though quickly horror-struck at his new danger, still by the impetus of despair borne forward had espied <sup>2230</sup> a cup of precious metal.*] There was a quantity of such things in that earth-cavern, ancient acquisitions; just as some unknown man in days of yore had in pensive thought hidden them there, the prodigious legacy of a noble race, treasures of worth. Death had carried

them all off previously, and that solitary one then of the proud company who had there longest kept afoot, a possessor mourning lost friends, would fain survive, 2240 if only that he might for a little space enjoy the long-accumulated wealth.

A barrow already existed on the down, nigh by the waves, sheer over the cliff, cunningly secured; therein did the owner of rings carry a ponderous quantity of beaten gold: a few words he spake: "Hold thou  
 "now O earth, now that the heroes could not, the  
 "possessions of mighty men. Lo! in thee at first the  
 "brave men found it; a violent death carried them  
 2250 "away, a fearful slaughter carried off every one of  
 "the men, my peers, who surrendered this life; they  
 "attained the joy of the (supernal) hall. Not one have  
 "I to wear a sword, or furbish the bossy tankard, the  
 "precious drink-stoup; the valiant are departed other-  
 "where. Now must the hard helmet, damascened with  
 "gold, shed its intaylèd foliations; the furbishers sleep,  
 "they whose task it was to keep the masks of war;  
 "likewise the war-coat which in battle and through the  
 "crash of shields was proof against the bite of swords,  
 2260 "shall moulder like the warrior. No longer can the  
 "ringèd mail along with the war-chief widely travel by  
 "the hero's side;—no delight of harp, no joy of glee-  
 "wood, no good hawk swinging through the hall, no  
 "swift horse tramping in the castle-court. Destructive  
 "death hath sent many generations far away." Thus  
 did he with sorrowful heart lament his unhappiness,  
 sole survivor of all he sadly wept, by day and by night,  
 2270 until that death's ripple touched at his heart.

The dazzling hoard was found open standing by the old



pest of twilight, the flaming one that haunteth barrows, the scaly spiteful dragon, that flyeth by night, surrounded with fire, whom country-folk hold in awful dread. His portion is to resort to the hoard underground, where he with winters aged shall guard heathen gold ; he will be no whit the better for it. So had that wide-ravager for three hundred winters held in the earth an enormous treasure-house, until that one angered him, 2280 a man angered his mood ;—to his chieftain the man bore a tankard bossed with gold, and prayed his lord for a covenant of peace. Then was the hoard rifled, quantity of jewels carried off ; the friendless man had his petition granted. The lord contemplated men's ancient work for the first time.

When the Worm woke, the quarrel was begun ; forthwith he sniffed the scent along the rock ; the marble-hearted one found the enemy's track ;—he had stepped forth abroad with undetected craft, hard 2290 by the dragon's head. So may that man, who retains the fealty of the Supreme, elude death and freely escape both harm and pursuit. The hoard-keeper sought diligently over the ground, he wanted to find the man, the man who had wrought him mischief in his sleep ; fiery and in raging mood he often swung around the tumulus, all out round about ; there was not any man there in that desert waste. Nevertheless he exulted in purpose of battle, of bloody work ; at intervals he would dash back into the barrow, would seek the costly vessel ; presently he had satisfied him- 2300 self of that, that some one of manfolk had invaded the gold, the mighty treasures. The hoard-keeper waited with difficulty until evening came ; so enraged

was the master of the barrow, the malignant one designed with fire to revenge the loss of the precious tankard. Presently the day was gone, the Worm had his will; no longer would he bide in fenced wall, but he issued forth with burning, equipped with fire. The  
2310 commencement of it was frightful to the people in the country, likewise it speedily had a sore ending upon their Benefactor.

## XXXIII.

The Dragon's devastations. The King's mansion burnt.

Beowulf's proud resolve to fight the dragon single handed. Retrospect of the hero's former achievements, and how he had become king.

Then the monster began to spirt fire-gleeds, to burn the cheerful farmsteads; the flame-light glared aloft, in defiance of men; the hostile air-flyer would leave nothing there alive. The war-craft of the Worm was manifest in all parts; the rage of the deadly foe was seen far and near; how the ravaging invader hated and ruined the Gothic people; to his hoard he shot  
2320 back again, to his dark mansion, before the hour of day. He had encompassed the landfolk with flame, with fire and conflagration; he trusted in his mountain, his war-craft, and his rampart; that confidence deceived him.

Then was the crushing news reported to Beowulf with swiftness and certainty, that his own mansion, best of buildings, was melting away in fiery eddies, even the gift-seat of the Goths. That was to the goodman a rude experience in his breast, hugest of heart-griefs; the wise man felt as if he should, in



despite of venerable law, break out against Providence, <sup>2330</sup>  
against the Eternal Lord, with bitter outrage ; his  
breast within him surged with murky thoughts, in a  
manner unwonted with him. The fire-drake had  
desolated the stronghold of the nobles, the sea-board  
front, that enclosed pale, with fiery missiles. For  
him therefore the war-king, the lord of the Storm-folk,  
studied revenge. He gave orders, that they should  
make for him, the shelter of warriors, the captain of  
knights, wholly of iron, a war-shield, a master-piece ;  
he knew assuredly, that forest-timber would not serve <sup>2340</sup>  
him, linden-wood against flame ! Destined he was, the  
prince of proved valour, to meet the end of his allotted  
days, of his worldly life ;—and the Worm (was to die)  
at the same time, long though he had held the hoarded  
wealth.

Then did he, of rings the patron, think it scorn  
that he should go seek the wide-flyer with a band,  
with a large host ; he had no fear of the encounter for  
himself, nor did the Worm's war-craft at all subdue his  
puissance and enterprize ; forasmuch as he whilere, in  
shrewd jeopardy, had carried him safe through many <sup>2350</sup>  
a contest, many a battle-crash, since the time that he,  
a victorious boy, had purged Hrothgar's hall, and with  
battailous grip had done for Grendel's kinsfolk, a loath-  
some brood.

Not by any means littlest of hand-to-hand encounters  
was that, where Hygelac was slain, what time the  
Gothic king in the clash of battle, the liege-lord of  
nations, in the Frieslands, the son of Hrethel, died by the  
thirsty sword, felled with bill. Thence Beowulf came off  
by his own peculiar strength, he went through a labour <sup>2360</sup>

of swimming; he had upon his arm thirty sets of war-harness when he all alone went down into the deep. The Hetware, who had confronted him bearing the linden, had no cause to be jubilant over the affray; few arrived back again from that battle-wolf to visit their home. He overswam the circuit of the fore-shore waters, Ecgtheow's son, woe-begone and solitary, and got back to his people, where Hygd proffered  
2370 him treasure and realm, jewels and royal throne;—she had not confidence in the Child, that he against foreigners would be able to vindicate the ancestral seats, now that Hygelac was dead. None the more readily could the bereaved people prevail with the Ætheling on any conditions whatever, that he should become Heardred's lord, or should consent to accept the kingdom; nevertheless he held to him in the public assembly with friendly guidance, respectfully with honour, up to the time that he became of full age and reigned over the Storm-Goths.

2380 He (Heardred) was visited from over sea by outlawed companions, Ohthere's sons; they had renounced allegiance to the crowned head of the Scylfings, the most excellent of the sea-kings that dispensed bounty in the Swedish realm, illustrious potentate. That was the limit of his (Heardred's) career; he there for his hospitality got a deadly wound with dynt of sword, did Hygelac's son; and Ongentheow's (grand)son returned to draw to his home, when Heardred had fallen; he  
2390 let Beowulf possess the royal throne and reign over the Goths;—that was a good king.



## XXXIV.

When Beowulf had come to the throne by the king's death he had remembered Heardred's banesman with vengeance. Preparing now for his last battle, he is filled with retrospective thoughts, and reviews his life from childhood.

For that national disaster he meditated retribution in later days ; he became a friend to Eadgils in his desolation. With force of men he supported the son of Ohthere over the wide sea, with warriors and weapons ; he had his revenge at length by means of cold and painful marches ; he deprived the king of life.

Thus had he, Ecgtheow's son, come well off out of all his contests, his perilous encounters, his daring adventures, up to that particular day when he had to <sup>2400</sup> engage with the Dragon. So he went twelfsome forth, he the Goths' commander, enflamed with fury, to reconnoitre the Dragon. He had by that time learnt what was the origin of the feud, the quarrel baleful to men ; into his lap the precious vase magnificent had come by the informant's hand. That was the thirteenth man in the party, he who had set up the quarrel at first ; captive, rueful, he was compelled submissively to shew the way to the spot ; he went against his will, to where <sup>2410</sup> he knew of a lonely earthen dome, a tumulus roofed with mould, near the sea-breakers, the clash of billows ; it was inwardly full of curiosities and filagrees ; the portentous keeper, aggressive war-demon, defended the golden treasures, old subterranean inhabitant ; no easy bargain to go in for was that, be the man who he may. Then did the resolute king sit him down on the

headland, and from that point he bade farewell, the Gothic lord, to his hearth-fellows ;—he had a sorrowful  
 2420 soul, agitated and boding, Wyrð awfully nigh, which was to greet the aged man, visit the soul's recess, divide asunder life from body ; not long then was the Ætheling's soul encircled with flesh.

Beowulf, Ecgtheow's son, uttered speech : “ Many a  
 “ foughten broil have I lived through in my youth,  
 “ many an hour of contest ; all that I now remember.  
 “ I was seven winter old when the master of riches, the  
 “ liege-lord of peoples, received me from my father ;  
 2430 “ king Hrethel held me as his own, gave me pocket-  
 “ money and sustenance, remembered kinship ; I was not  
 “ at all less pleasing to him as a varlet in the castle, than  
 “ any one of his own boys, Herebeald and Hæthcyn, or  
 “ my own lord Hygelac. For the eldest a bloody bed  
 “ was unnaturally strown by the doings of a brother,  
 “ inasmuch as Hæthcyn by arrow from horn-bow brought  
 “ him down, his high kinsman ; he missed the target and  
 2440 “ shot his brother ; one brother killed the other with  
 “ bloody dart ; that was an assault past compensation,  
 “ dastardly perpetrated, heart-paralyzing ;—any way  
 “ and every way it was unavoidable that the etheling  
 “ must quit life unavenged.

“ In like manner it is a rueful thing for an aged  
 “ husbandman to experience, that his son should ride  
 “ young on the gallow-tree, and he wail a dirge, a  
 “ sorrowful song, while his son hangs for the raven's  
 “ benefit, and he, old and of ripe experience, cannot  
 2450 “ bring him any help. Continually he is reminded,  
 “ every morning, of his son's absence ; he cares not to  
 “ look forward to another heir in the family seat, when



“the one hath through violent death received for his  
“deeds.

“Sorrow-worn he beholds in his son’s bower a  
“deserted guest-hall, a lodging for the wind, bereft of  
“hilarity ; the riders sleep, the men are in the grave ;  
“there is no sound of harp, no revels in the courts, as  
“there were once.

## XXXV.

Beowulf continues the story of Hrethel, who died of  
a broken heart. Further discourses of Beowulf. He  
gives a great shout, and the Dragon comes forth.  
The fight begins ; Beowulf in distress.

“He takes to his bed ; chanteth a lay of sorrow, <sup>2460</sup>  
“the solitary one in memory of one (departed) ; to him  
“all seemed too open, both country and town-place.

“So did the crownèd head of the Storm-folk, in  
“memory of Herebeald, carry about a tumult of heart-  
“sorrow ; he could not possibly requite the feud upon  
“the man-slayer ; neverthemore could he pursue the  
“warrior with hostile deeds, though he was not  
“beloved by him. He then with the sorrow, where-  
“with that wound had stricken him, resigned the en-  
“joyment of human life, chose the light of God ; to his <sup>2470</sup>  
“children he left, as a wealthy man doth, land and  
“castle, when he went out of life.

“Then was there provocation and reprisal between  
“Swedes and Goths over wide water, claims reciprocal,  
“obstinate hard struggle, after Hrethel was dead, and  
“Ongentheow’s sons were impetuous, keen for adven-  
“ture, and would not keep peace across the lakes ; but  
“about Hreosnabeorh they often contrived a truculent  
“ambuscade. That did my cousins (i. e. Hæthcyn

2480 "and Hygelac) revenge, the outrage and the wrong, as  
"it was notorious, though one of them paid for it with  
"his life, a hard bargain:—to Hæthcyn, the Gothic  
"monarch, the war was fatal. Then in the morning,  
"so runs the tale, brother avenged brother with sharp  
"sword upon the smiter, where Ongentheow engaged  
"with Eofor; the war-helmet was split, the aged Scyl-  
"fing fell blanced in death; the smiting hand made  
"reckoning for feuds enough, shrank not from the  
"deadly swoop.

2490 "The treasures which he had bestowed upon  
"me I paid him in war, as opportunity was given me,  
"with flashing sword; he gave me land, a dwelling-  
"place, the joy of proprietorship. No need had  
"he, that he among the Gepidæ, or the Spear-Danes,  
"or in the Swedish realm, should have to seek inferior  
"champions, hire them with pay; ever would I be  
"to the fore in his marching ranks, single in the  
"van; and so shall I lifelong practise warfare, while  
2500 "this sword holdeth out, which hath often done me  
"good service early and late, since the time when of  
"my prowess I did with (unarmed) hand kill Dæghrefn,  
"the champion of the Hugas; he might not (as he  
"had expected) bring the rich spoils (viz. of the slain  
"Hygelac?), the breast-decoration, to the Frisian king;  
"but in the battle-field he crouched, the standard-  
"keeper, prince in chivalry. No weapon was his  
"bane, but the war-grapple checked his heart-currents,  
"broke his bone-house. Now (on the contrary) must  
"the weapon's edge, the hand and the hard sword,  
"contend for the treasure."

2510 Beowulf uttered speech, with boastful words he



spake, for the last time: "I hazarded many wars in  
"youth; yet again will I, the aged keeper of the folk,  
"seek strife, and do famously; if the fell ravager out of  
"his earthen dome will come forth to meet me." Then  
did he address a word of greeting to each of his men,  
the keen helm-wearers, for the last time, his own familiar  
comrades. "I would not bear sword or weapon to  
"meet the Worm, if I knew how I might otherwise  
"maintain my vaunt against the monster, as I formerly 2520  
"did against Grendel. But there I expect fire deadly  
"scorching, blast and venom; for that reason I  
"have upon me shield and byrnie. I will not flee  
"away from the keeper of the mountain, no not a foot  
"space; but it shall be decided between us two on this  
"rampart, as Wyrd allots us, (and) the Governor of every  
"man. I am in spirit so eager for action, that I cut  
"short bragging against the wingy warrior. Await ye  
"on the mountain, with your byrnies about you, men- 2530  
"at-arms, to see which of us twain may after deadly  
"tussle best be able to survive his hurt. That is not  
"your mission, nor any man's task save mine alone,  
"that he try strength against the monster, achieve  
"heroism. I must with daring conquer gold, or else  
"war carrieth, pitiless life-bale carrieth away your  
"lord!"

Up rose then by the brink the resolute warrior, stern  
under his helmet, he wore battle-sark among rugged 2540  
cliffs, he trusted the strength of his single manhood;  
such is not the way of a craven. Then he beheld near  
the rampart—he who, excellent in accomplishments, had  
survived a great number of wars, of battle-clashes, when  
armed men close—beheld where stood a rocky arch,

and out of it a stream breaking from the barrow, the surface of that burne was steaming hot with cruel fire; nigh to the hoard could not the hero unscorched any while survive for the flame of the dragon.

- 2550 Then did the prince of the Storm-Goths, being elate with rage, let forth word out of his breast, the strong-hearted stormed; the shout penetrated within (the cavern), vibrating clear as a battle-cry, under the hoary rock. Fury was stirred; the hoard-warder recognized speech of man; opportunity was there no more, to stickle for terms of peace. In advance first of all there came the reeking breath of the monster, out from the rock, a hot jet of defiance; the
- 2560 ground trembled. The warrior under the barrow side, the Gothic captain, swung his mighty shield against the hideous customer; therewithal was the heart of the ringy worm incited to seek battle. Already the brave war-king had drawn sword, ancient heirloom of speedy edge; each of the belligerents had a dread of the other. Resolute in mind the Prince of friends took stand well up to his hoised shield, while the Worm buckled suddenly in a bow;—he stood to his weapons.
- 2570 Then did the flaming foe, curved like an arch, advance upon him with headlong shuffle. The shield effectually protected life and limb a less while for the glorious chieftain than his sanguine hope expected, supposing he, that time, early in the morning, was to achieve glory in the strife;—so had Wyrð not ordained it. Up swung he his hand, the Gothic captain, he smote the spotted horror with the mighty heirloom, that its brown edge turned upon the bony crust; less effectually bit than was required by the



king's need, who was sorely pressed. Then was the 2580  
keeper of the barrow after that shrewd assault furious  
with rage, cast forth devouring fire, the deadly sparks  
sprang every way: the gold-friend of the Goths plumed  
him not on strokes of vantage; the war-bill had failed  
him with its bared edge on the foe, as it had not been  
expected to do, metal of old renown. That was no  
light experience, inducing the mighty son of Ecgtheow  
to relinquish that emprize; he must consent to  
inhabit a dwelling elsewhere;—so must every man 2590  
resign allotted days.

Then was it not long until the combatants closed  
again. The hoard-warder rallied his courage, out of  
his breast shot steam, as beginning again;—direly  
suffering, encompassed with fire, was he who erewhile  
had ruled men. Not (alas!) in a band did his life-  
guardsmen, sons of ethelings, stand about him with  
war-custom of comrades; no, to the wood they slunk,  
to shelter life. In one only of them did his soul surge 2600  
in a tumult of grief;—kindred may never be diverted  
from duty, for the man who is rightly minded.

### XXXVI.

**Beowulf had one faithful follower in the desperate  
struggle. His fatal wound.**

Wiglaf was his name, Weohstan's son, a beloved  
warrior, a Leod of the Scylfings, a kinsman of Ælfhere:  
he beheld his liege-lord under helmet, distressed by the  
heat. Then did he remember the (territorial) Honour  
which he (Beowulf) had formerly given him, the well-  
stocked homestead of the Wægmundings, every poli-

tical prerogative which his father had enjoyed ; then  
2610 could he not refrain ; hand grasped shield, yellow linden,  
drew the old sword, known among men as the relic of  
Eánmund, son of Ohthere, whom, when a lordless exile,  
Weohstan had slain, in fair fight, with weapon's edge ;  
and from his kindred had carried off the brown-mottled  
helmet, ringèd byrnie, old mysterious sword ; which  
Onela yielded to him, his nephew's war-harness, ac-  
coutrement complete ; not a word spake he (Onela)  
about the feud, although he (Weohstan) had killed his  
2620 brother's son. He (Weohstan) retained the spoils  
many years, bill and byrnie, until when his boy was  
able to claim warrior's rank, like his father before him ;  
then gave he to him before the Goths armour untold of  
every sort ; after which he departed out of life, ripe for  
the parting journey.

Now this was the first adventure for the young  
champion wherein he had with his liege lord to enter-  
prize the risk of war ; his courage did not melt in  
him, nor did his kinsman's heirloom prove weak in the  
conflict ; a fact which the Worm experienced, as soon  
2630 as they had come to close quarters.

Wiglaf discoursed much that was fitting ; he said to his  
comrades that his soul was sad :—" I recall the time,  
"when we enjoyed the mead, then did we promise our  
"lord in the festive hall, to him who gave us rings, that  
"we would repay him the war-harness, if any need of  
"this kind should befall him, would repay him for  
"helmets and tempered swords. That is why he chose  
2640 "us of his host for this adventure by his own preference,  
"reminded us of glory and promised rewards, because  
"he counted us brave warriors, keen helm-wearers ;



“although our lord had designed single-handed to ac-  
 “complish this mighty work, the shepherd of his people,  
 “forasmuch as he of all men had achieved most of famous  
 “exploits, of desperate deeds. Now is the day come, that  
 “our liege lord behoves the strength of brave warriors ;  
 “let us go to him, help our war-chief, while the scorching  
 “heat is on him, the grim fiery terror ! God knows of 2650  
 “me, that I had much liever the flame should swallow  
 “my body with my gold-giver. Me thinketh it indecent,  
 “that we bear our shields back to our home, unless we  
 “can first quell the foe, and rescue the life of the Storm-  
 “folk’s ruler. I know well those were not the old  
 “habits of service, that he alone of the Gothic nobles  
 “should bear the brunt, should sink in fight ; our  
 “sovereign must be requited for sword and helm,  
 “byrnie and stately uniform, and so he shall by me,  
 “though a common death take us both <sup>1</sup>.” 2660

Then he sped through the deadly reek, he came with  
 helm on head to his lord’s assistance ; few words spake  
 he : “My liege Beowulf, now make good all that which  
 “thou once saidst in time of youth, that thou never by  
 “thy life-time wouldest let thy glory decline ; now must  
 “thou, glorious in deeds, etheling impetuous, with all  
 “thy might defend life ; I shall support thee to the  
 “utmost.”

After these words were spoken, the Worm came on in  
 fury, the fell malignant monster came on for the second 2670  
 time, with fire-jets flashing, to engage his enemies, hated  
 men ; with the waves of flame the shield was consumed  
 all up to the boss ; the mail-coat could not render

<sup>1</sup> Here I have adopted Prof. Sophus Bugge’s emendation. See note  
 below.

assistance to the young warrior ; but the young stripling valorously went forward under his kinsman's shield when his own was reduced to ashes by the gleeds. Then once more the warlike king remembered glory, remembered his forceful strength, so smote with battle-  
 2680 bill that it stood in the monster's head, desperately impelled. Nægling flew in splinters, Beowulf's sword betrayed him in battle, though old and monumental gray. To him was it not granted, that edges of iron should help him in fight ; too strong was the hand of the man who with his stroke overtaxed (as I have heard say) all swords whatsoever ; so that when he carried to conflict a weapon preternaturally hard, he was none the better for it.

Then for the third time was the monstrous ravager,  
 2690 the infuriated fire-drake, roused to vengeance ; he rushed on the heroic man, as he had yielded ground, fiery and destructive, his entire neck he enclosed with lacerating teeth ; he was bloodied over with the vital stream ; gore surged forth in waves.

### XXXVII.

**The Dragon slain. Beowulf in mortal agony.**

Then I heard tell how, in the glorious king's extremity, the young noble put forth exemplary prowess of force and daring, as was his nature to ; he regarded not that (formidable) head, but the valiant man's hand was scorched, while he helped his kinsman, inso-  
 2700 much that he smote the fell creature a little lower down, the man-at-arms did, with such effect that the sword penetrated, the chased and gilded sword, yea



with such effect that the fire began to subside from that moment.

Then once more the beloved king recovered his senses, drew the war-knife, biting and battle-sharp, which he wore on his mail-coat; the crownèd head of the Storm-folk gashed the Worm in the middle. They had quelled the foe, death-daring prowess had executed revenge, and they two together, cousin ethelings, had destroyed him;—such should a fellow be, a thane at need. To the chieftain that was the supreme triumphal hour of his career—by his own 2710 deeds—of his life's completed work.

Then began the wound which the earth-dragon had just now inflicted on him, to inflame and swell. That he soon discovered, that in his breast fatal mischief was working, venom in the inward parts. Then the Etheling went until he sate him on a stone by the mound, thoughtfully pondering; he looked upon the cunning work of dwarfs, how there the world-old earth-dome do contain within it stone arches firmly set upon piers. Upon him then, gory from conflict, illustrious 2720 monarch, the thane immeasurably good, ladled water with hand upon his natural chieftain, battle-worn;—and unloosened his helmet. Beowulf discoursed—in spite of his hurt he spake, his deadly exhausting wound; he knew well that he had spent his hours, his enjoyment of earth; surely all was gone of the tale of his days, death immediately nigh—“Now I would have  
“given my war-weeds to my son, had it so been that 2730  
“any heir had been given to come after me, born of my  
“body. I have ruled this people fifty winters;—there  
“was not the king, not any king of those neighbouring

"peoples, who dared to greet me with war-mates,  
 "to menace with terror. I in my habitation observed  
 "social obligations, I held my own with justice, I  
 "have not sought insidious quarrels, nor have I sworn  
 "many false oaths. Considering all this, I am able,  
 2740 "though sick with deadly wounds, to have comfort;  
 "forasmuch as the Ruler of men cannot charge me with  
 "murder-bale of kinsmen, when my life quitteth the body.

"Now quickly go thou, to examine the treasure,  
 "under the hoary rock, beloved Wiglaf, now the Worm  
 "lieth dead, sleepeth sore wounded, of riches bereaved.  
 "Be now on the alert, that I may ascertain the ancient  
 "wealth, the golden property, may fully survey the  
 "brilliant, the curious gems; that I may be able the  
 2750 "more contentedly, after (seeing) the treasured store, to  
 "resign my life, and the lordship which I long have  
 "held."

## XXXVIII.

Beowulf is gratified with seeing the treasures; he  
 demises the crown, and dies.

Then I heard tell how the son of Wihstan after the  
 injunction promptly obeyed his wounded death-sick  
 lord; bore his ring-mail, linkèd war-sark, under the  
 roof of the barrow. Then the victorious youth, as he  
 went along by the stony bench, the true and courageous  
 thane, beheld many jewels of value, gold glistening, in-  
 denting the ground, wondrous things in the barrow;—  
 2760 and the lair of the Worm, the old dawn-flyer—vases  
 standing, choice vessels of men of old, with none to  
 burnish them,—their incrustations fallen away. There  
 was many a helmet, old and rusty, many a bracelet, with



appendage of trinkets. Treasure may easily, gold in the earth, may easily make a fool of any man; heed it who will! Likewise he saw looming above the hoard a banner all golden, greatest marvel of handiwork, woven with arts of incantation; out of it there stood forth a gleam of light, insomuch that he was able to discern the surface of the floor, and survey the strange curiosities. Of the Worm there was not any appearance, but the knife had put him out of the way. 2770

Then heard I how in the chambered mound the old work of dwarfs was spoiled by a single man, how he gathered into his lap cups and platters at his own discretion; the banner also he took, the most brilliant of ensigns; the sword with its iron edge had even now dispatched the old proprietor, the one who had been the possessor of these treasures for a long while; a hot and flaming terror he had waged for the hoard, gushing with destruction at midnights; until he died the death. 2780

The messenger was in haste, eager to return, fraught with spoils; painfully he wondered in his brave soul whether he should find alive the prince of the Storm-folk, on the open ground where he left him erst, chivalrously dying. He then bearing the treasures, found the illustrious king, his captain, bleeding from his wounds, at the extremity of life; he began again to sprinkle him with water, until the point of speech forced open the treasures of his breast. Beowulf discoursed, the old man in pain, he contemplated the gold: "I do  
"utter a thanksgiving to the Lord of all, to the king of  
"glory, to the eternal captain, for those spoils upon  
"which I here do gaze; to think that I have been per-  
"mitted to acquire such for my Leeds before the day of 2790

2800 "my death. Now I have sold my expiring life-term for  
 "a hoard of treasure; ye now shall provide for the  
 "requirements of the Leeds; I cannot be any longer  
 "here. Order my brave warriors to erect a lofty cairn  
 "after the bale-fire, at the headland over the sea; it shall  
 "tower aloft on Hronesness for a memorial to my Leeds,  
 "that sea-faring men in time to come may call it  
 "Beowulf's Barrow, those who on distant voyages drive  
 "their foamy barks over the scowling floods."

The brave-hearted monarch took off from his neck  
 2810 the golden collar and gave it to the thane, to the young  
 spear-fighter, his gold-hued helmet, coronet, and byrnie;  
 bade him brook them well: "Thou art the last remnant  
 "of our stock, of the Wægmundings; Fate has swept  
 "all my kinsmen away into eternity, princes in chivalry;  
 "I must after them."

That was the aged man's latest word, from the medi-  
 tations of his breast, before he chose the bale-fire, the  
 hot consuming flames;—out of his bosom the soul  
 2820 departed, to enter into the lot of the Just.

### XXXIX.

**A brief review of the situation. Wiglaf upbraids the  
 recreant *gesiðas*. He pronounces upon them and their  
 kin a sentence of degradation.**

Thus had a hard experience overtaken the inexpe-  
 rienced youth, that he saw upon the ground the man  
 who was dearest to him at his life's end in a helpless  
 condition. His destroyer likewise lay dead, the horrible  
 earth-dragon, bereft of life, crushed in ruin; no longer  
 was the coiled Worm to be lord of the jewel-treasures,



but they had been wrested from him with weapons of iron, hard battle-sharp relics of hammers, insomuch that <sup>2830</sup> the wide-flyer tamed by wounds had fallen on earth nigh to the hoard-chamber; no more through the regions of air did he sportively whirl at midnights, and elate over his treasured property display his presence; but on earth he collapsed, through mighty hand of warrior-prince.

Howbeit, that has rarely in the world prospered with men, even men of fame,—by my information,—daring though a man might be in all deeds whatsoever; that he should rush against the breath of the poisonous destroyer, or with hands molest the ring- <sup>2840</sup> hall, if he found the keeper waking, at home in the barrow. Beowulf had purchased the gain of princely treasures with his death; he had howsoever reached the end of transitory life.

Then was it not long until the war-laggards quitted the wood, the faint-hearted traitors, ten all together, those who whilere durst not sport their lances in the great need of their liege lord; but they in shame bore <sup>2850</sup> their shields, their war-weeds, to the place where the aged warrior lay dead;—they looked upon Wiglaf!

He sate wearied out, the active champion, nigh his lord's shoulder; was refreshing him with water; his care availed nothing; he could not retain upon earth, well as he would have wished it, that chieftain's life; nor turn the Almighty's will; the dispensation of God would take effect upon men of all conditions, just as it does at present. Then had the young man <sup>2860</sup> a grim answer promptly ready for such as erst had

failed in courage. Wiglaf discoursed, Weohstan's son ; the youth with sorrowful heart looked upon men whom he no longer loved :—

“That, look you, may a man say, a man who is  
“minded to speak the truth, that the chieftain who  
“gave you those decorations, military apparel, which  
“ye there stand upright in,—when he at ale-bench often  
“presented to inmates of his hall helmet and byrnie,  
2870 “as a prince to thanes, of such make as he far or near  
“could procure most trusty—that he utterly threw away  
“those war-weeds miserably. When stress of battle  
“overtook him, the folk-king had by no means cause to  
“boast of his companions-in-arms ; nevertheless it was  
“accorded to him by God the ordainer of victories, that  
“he avenged himself single-handed with his weapon,  
“when his valour was put to the proof. Little protec-  
“tion could I afford him in the conflict, and I attempted  
“nevertheless what was beyond my ability, to help my  
2880 “kinsman ;—ever was he (the dragon) the feeblener, when  
“I with sword smote the destroyer, the fire less violently  
“gushed from his inwards. Defenders too few pressed  
“round their prince, when the dire moment overtook  
“him. Now must (all) sharing of treasure, and presen-  
“tation of swords, all patrimonial wealth and estate,  
“escheat from your kin ; every man of that family may  
“roam destitute of land-right, as soon as ethelings at  
“a distance are informed of your desertion, your ig-  
2890 “nominous conduct. Death is preferable, for every  
“warrior, rather than a life of infamy.”



## XL.

**Announcement of the event to the armed host. The envoy adds a discourse, reviewing the situation.**

Orders gave he then to announce the issue of the conflict to the camp up over the seacliff, where the host of eorls, from morning all day long, had with anxious hearts sate by their shields, in divided anticipation between a fatal day and the return of the beloved man. Little reticent was he of the latest tidings, he who rode up the bluff; he truthfully spake out in the hearing of all: "Now is the bounteous chief of the Leeds of 2900  
 "the Stormfolk, the captain of the Goths, motionless on  
 "bed of death, he dwells in war-like repose by the  
 "deeds of the Worm! with him in even case lieth his  
 "mortal antagonist, smitten with dirk-wounds:—with  
 "sword he could not upon the monster by any means  
 "effect a wound. Over Beowulf sitteth Wīglāf, Wih-  
 "stan's boy, a living eorl over a dead; over his uncon-  
 "scious head he holdeth guard against friend and foe. 2910

"Now the Leeds may expect a time of war, as soon  
 "as the king's fall is published abroad among Franks  
 "and Frisians. The obstinate quarrel with the Hugas  
 "was set up when Hygelac came with embarkèd army  
 "upon the Frisian land, where the Hetware in battle  
 "vanquished him; resolutely they struck with over-  
 "whelming force, insomuch that the mailed warrior was  
 "compelled to bow his head; he fell among the fighting  
 "men: far was he from giving spoils as chieftain to his 2920  
 "veterans;—to us ever since that time has the favour  
 "of the Merwing been unaccorded.

"Nor do I anywise count upon peace or good under-  
 "standing on the side of Sweden;—indeed it was a  
 "far-famed story, how that Ongentheow slew Hæthcyn  
 "the son of Hrethel by Ravenswood, whenas the warlike  
 "Scylfings had been the first to invade for sheer  
 "insolence the people of the Goths. Promptly did the  
 "veteran, the father of Ohthere, old and awful, deliver  
 2930 "his onslaught, demolished the sea-king (Hæthcyn),  
 "rescued his consort, the aged man rescued the wife of  
 "his youth, though plundered of her jewels, the mother  
 "of Onela and of Ohthere, and then pursued his deadly  
 "foes, until they got away, with great difficulty, into  
 "Ravensholt, bereaved of their lord. Then did he, with  
 "host drawn out, surround those whom the sword had  
 "left, men exhausted with wounds, he repeatedly  
 "threatened woe to the poor band all the livelong  
 2940 "night: he said that in the morning he would reach  
 "them with the edge of the sword, and (hang) some on  
 "gallow-trees to please the birds.

"Courage at length returned to the dejected men with  
 "dawn of day, when they heard Hygelac's horn, and the  
 "sound of his trumpet; presently the brave (prince)  
 "came marching upon their track with the best of his  
 "Leeds.

## XLI.

**Conclusion of the envoy's discourse. The battalion  
 visits the scene of the supreme conflict.**

"Then was the gory track of Swedes and Goths, the  
 "deadly strife of men, widely conspicuous, how the folk



“on either side revived the feud. Then did the valiant  
“man proceed with his comrades, the solemn veteran, 2950  
“to seek a place of strength; the warrior Ongentheow  
“turned towards the hill; he had heard tell of the war-  
“fare of Hygelac, the war-craft of the valiant; he trusted  
“not in resistance, that he could defy the seamen, the  
“travellers of the deep, could protect his treasure,  
“his children, and his wife; so he retired back there-  
“from, the old king retired behind the earth-wall.  
“Then was chase given to the Swedish Leeds; the  
“banners of Hygelac moved forward over that peaceful  
“plain, and presently the Hrêthlings massed them- 2960  
“selves upon the garrison. Then was Ongentheow,  
“the gray-haired, driven to bay with sword-edges,  
“insomuch that the mighty king was constrained to  
“put up with the one-handed decision of Eofor. Him  
“(Ongentheow) had Wulf son of Wonred fiercely  
“attacked with weapon, so effectually, that with the  
“stroke his blood flew from his veins out from under  
“his hair. He was not daunted however, the aged  
“Scilfing; but he quickly repaid that deadly assault  
“with worse barter, as soon as the mighty king 2970  
“had collected himself. The brisk son of Wonred  
“failed to give counter-blow to the old veteran, but  
“he (Ongentheow) had first shorn the helmet on  
“his head, so that blood-sprinkled he was forced to  
“bow, he fell on the ground;—he was not at that time  
“death-doomed as yet, but he recovered from it, though  
“the wound had touched him close. Then did Hygelac’s  
“valiant thane (i. e. Eofor) let his broad blade, gigant-  
“esque old sword, his dwarf-wrought helmet, break 2980  
“over the shield-wall; then crouched the king, the

“people’s shepherd, he was fatally smitten. Then were  
 “there many who bound up his brother’s wounds (of  
 “Wulf the brother of Eofor), who quickly raised him  
 “up, when they had got the ground cleared, so that  
 “they had command of the place of battle. Meanwhile  
 “warrior stripped warrior; he (Eofor) captured on  
 “Ongentheow the iron breast-mail, his hard sword  
 “with hilt, and his helmet likewise, the grey-beard’s  
 “accoutrements;—to Hygelac he bare them. He  
 “accepted the spoils, and made him a fair promise of  
 2990 “rewards before his Leeds, and he kept his word; he,  
 “the lord of the Goths, the son of Hrêthel, when he  
 “arrived at his mansion, repaid Jofor and Wulf for that  
 “war-brunt, with treasure extraordinary; he gave to  
 “each of them a hundred thousand of land and collars  
 “of filigree; none could jeer at them for those rewards,  
 “not a man in the world, since they had achieved those  
 “exploits;—and moreover he bestowed upon Jofor his  
 “only daughter, to make his home honourable, and for  
 “a pledge of loyalty.

“Such is the feud and the enmity and the deadly  
 3000 “grudge of the men, even the Swedish Leeds, who, as  
 “I apprehend, will attack us, as soon as they shall learn  
 “that our prince is dead, he who whilere hath upheld  
 “against hostilities, our treasure and our realm<sup>1</sup>, was  
 “master of public counsel, or won ever-increasing  
 “glory in war. Now is quickness best, that we should  
 “there look upon the mighty king, and bring him who  
 3010 “gave us bracelets, on to the funeral-pile. It is not  
 “meet that some trifling matter be consumed with the  
 “high-souled man; but yonder is a hoard of precious

<sup>1</sup> Müllenhoff first pointed out that line 3005 must be omitted.



“things, gold uncounted, frightfully bargained for, and  
“now at last jewels purchased with the hero’s own  
“life; those must fire devour, the flame must enfold  
“them; never a warrior wear ornament for memorial,  
“nor maiden sheen have on her neck the decorated  
“collar, but on the contrary must in dejected mood  
“and stripped of gold ornaments tread often and often  
“the land of the stranger, now the army leader 3020  
“hath laid aside laughter, game, and glee. Therefore  
“shall many a spear in the cold of the morning be  
“clutched in men’s grasp, hoisted in the hand; no  
“swough of harp shall waken the warriors: but the  
“bleak raven fluttering over carnage shall chatter  
“abundantly, recount to the eagle of his luck at the  
“spread, while alongside of the wolf he stripped the  
“slain.”

Thus was the ardent youth discoursing of painful themes; he erred not widely of events or words. All 3030 the troop arose, they went unjoyous, under the Eagle’s Crag, with gushing tears, to behold the tremendous sight. They found there, on the sand, bereft of life, and keeping his helpless bed, the man who had given them rings in times bygone; there had the final day come to the valiant, in that the warlike king, the prince of the Wederas, had perished with a death heroic.

. . . never saw they frightfuller object—the dragon on the ground there right before their face, the loath- 3040 some beast lying dead; all scorched with flames was the fire-drake, the grisly gruesome pest; it was fifty foot-measurements long where it lay; in the pride of the air he had been supreme during the hours of night, and then down would he return back again to reconnoitre his

lair:—now he was there stock dead, had made his last use of earthly caverns. By the side of it stood pots and bowls; there dishes lay about, and swords of price, rusty and corroded, as if they in earth's lap a  
 3050 thousand winters there had sojourned; forasmuch as that patrimony, huge and vast, that gold of ancient men, had been closed about with enchantment; and therefore that treasure-chamber might not be touched by any one of mankind, save in so far as God himself, the true king of achievements, should grant to the man of his choice to open the hoard the sorcerers' hold:—even to such one of mankind whomso he deemed to be meet.

## XLII.

**Reflections upon the great event. Wiglaf publishes Beowulf's dying orders. Preparations for the bale-fire. The cavern is rifled, and the treasures are piled on a wagon to follow the bier. The last of the Dragon.**

Then was it manifest, that good luck attended not upon the course of them who by unlawful means had  
 3060 closely safe-guarded valuables under the mound. At first the keeper slew one here and there; at length the feud had grown to be expiated furiously. By a heroic death therefore in some manner should a brave warrior accomplish the end of life's record, seeing that he cannot much longer as a man in the midst of his kinsfolk inhabit the mead-hall. Such was Beowulf's lot, when he went forth to seek the Keeper of the barrow, went to seek deadly strife, he himself knew not by what means his severance from the world was destined  
 3070 to happen, according as the mighty captains, when they that deposited there, had uttered a deep spell to



hold till doomsday, that the man who invaded that ground should be criminally guilty, cabined in heathen fanes, fast bound with hell-bands, penally doomed; yet never did he at any previous time more effectually experience the gold-bestowing favour of God.

Wiglâf son of Wihstan lifted up his voice: "Often  
"must many a brave man, by the will of one, endure  
"tribulation, as it hath happened to us. We were not  
"able to convince our beloved master, the shepherd of 3080  
"the kingdom, by any reasoning, that he should not  
"challenge yon gold-warden, but should leave him to  
"lie where he had long been, and to dwell in his haunts  
"till the end of the world, fulfil high destiny. The  
"hoard is laid open to our view, fearfully purchased;  
"too overpowering was that boon which attracted our  
"prince thither. I was in the interior of the place, and  
"I explored the whole of it, the stores of the chamber,  
"inasmuch as the way had been opened for me and  
"that by no gentle means, passage was permitted in 3090  
"under the earthen dome. Hurriedly I grappled with  
"my hands a huge mighty burden of hoarded treasures;  
"out hither I bore them to the feet of my king. He  
"was still alive then, wise and sensible; freely did he  
"talk, the aged one in death-pang; and he commanded  
"me to give you his greeting, he bade that you should  
"construct, in memory of your chieftain's deeds, upon  
"the scene of the bale-fire, a barrow of the highest,  
"mighty and magnifical, according as he was of all men  
"the warrior most famous, through the wide earth, so 3100  
"long as he might enjoy the wealth of his castle.

"Go to, let us now hasten, a second time, to see and to  
"visit the ruck of jewels, the spectacle beneath the earth-

“work. I will be your guide, so that ye shall have your  
“fill of seeing close at hand, collars and bullion gold.

“Let the bier be ready, promptly equipped, attending  
“us as we go forth of this place, and so let us convey  
“our master, the beloved man, to the place where he  
“shall tarry long in the safe keeping of the Almighty.”

3110 Then did the son of Wihstan order his brave warriors  
that they should issue commands to many homestead-  
owners, for them to haul pyre-timber from far to meet  
the occasion of the Ruler of men:—“Now must fire  
“devour, the scowling flame must wash, the Pillar of  
“warriors, him who often stood the shock of the iron  
“shower, what time the storm of missiles, urged by  
“bow-strings, hurtled over the shield-wall, the shaft  
“did its duty, with feather-fittings eager it backed up the  
“arrow’s point.”

3120 Thereupon the prudent son of Wihstan called out of  
the squadron some thanes of the king, seven of them to-  
gether, the choicest; he made the eighth, and went with  
them under the dangerous roof; a warrior bore in hand a  
flaming torch, and he walked in front. It was not staked  
upon lot who should have the looting of that hoard, when  
the warriors had partly taken a view of it in its keeper-  
less state occupying the chamber, lying helpless. Little  
3130 did any man scruple that they should with all dispatch  
convey abroad the valuable treasures; the Dragon  
moreover they haled, they shoved the Worm over the  
precipitous cliff, they let the wave take him, the flood  
engulf him, that warder of precious spoils.

There was coiled gold laden upon wagon, countless  
in quantity of every kind;—the Etheling was borne on  
a bier, the hoary warrior, to Hrónesness.



## XLIII.

## The Funeral and the Epitaph.

For him then did the Leeds of the Goths construct a pyre upon the earth, one of no mean dimensions, hung about with helmets, with battle-boards, with bright <sup>3140</sup> byrnies, as he had requested; then did they, heaving deep sighs, lay in the midst of it the illustrious chieftain, the hero, the beloved lord. Then began the warriors to kindle upon the hill the hugest of bale-fires; the wood-smoke mounted up black over the combustive mass, the roaring blaze shot aloft, mingled with the howling of the wind-currents; until the sweltering element had demolished the bone-house. With hearts distressed and care-laden minds they mourned their liege lord's death; likewise a dirge of sorrow <sup>3150</sup> <sup>1</sup> *was sung in honour of Beowulf by the aged dame, her hair bound up, her soul sorrowing; she said repeatedly, that she sorely dreaded for herself evil days, much bloodshed, the warrior's horror, shame and captivity.* Heaven swallowed the smoke.

Then did the people of the Wederas construct a tumulus on the hill; it was high and broad, to sea-voyagers widely conspicuous; and during ten days <sup>3160</sup> they laboured about the building of the war-hero's beacon: they surrounded the ashes of the conflagration with an embankment in such wise as men of eminent skill could contrive it with noblest effect. They deposited in the barrow collars and brilliants, the whole

<sup>1</sup> Here are six mutilated lines, in which the most leading word means 'woman,' and, with Grein's emendation, 'old woman.' This seems to have suggested Hecuba to Professor Bugge, and with his talent at reconstruction he has stopped the gap as in the Italics above.

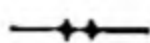
of such trappings as war-breathing men had recently captured in the Hoard; they abandoned the accumulated wealth of eorlas for the earth to retain it, gold in marl, where it now still continues to be as useless to mankind as it was erst.

3170 Then there rode around the tumulus war-chiefs, sons of ethelings, twelve in all; they would bewail their loss, bemoan the king, recite an elegy, and celebrate his name. They admired his manhood, and they loftily appraised his daring work; as it is fitting that a man should with words extol his liege lord, should cherish him in his affections, when he must take his departure from the tenemental body.

Thus did the Leeds of the Goths, the companions of  
3180 his hearth, lament the fall of their lord;—they said that he was of all kings in the world, the mildest and most affable to his men; most genial to his Leeds; and most desirous of PRAISE.



## NOTES



1. *What ho!* Hwæt.

This 'what' is not interrogative, but interjectional; it calls attention to the song, and it became the formula of overture for a Lay; just as in the medieval time the Lay began with 'Listenith lordinges!' The exordium of the romantic Lay was imitated in religious poetry, and this opening *Hwæt!* is found in several poems of the secondary Epic, e. g. *Andreas*, *Holy Rood*, *Destinies of Apostles*, *Juliana*.

3. *advanced bravery*: *ellen fremedon*.

I have hardly refrained myself from translating *ellen* chivalry, to the idea of which it approaches very near.

4. *Scyld of the Sheaf*: *Scyld Scéfig*.

Not 'Scyld the son of Scaf;' for it is too inconsistent even in myth, to give a patronymic to a foundling. According to the original form of the story, *Soëaf* was the foundling, he had come ashore in a boat with a sheaf of corn, and from that was named. This form of the story is preserved in *Ethelwerd* and in *William of Malmesbury*. But here the foundling is *Scyld*, and we must suppose he was picked up with the sheaf, and hence his cognomen.

4 f. For a prose example of this syntax, *ostéon* with Dative of person and Genitive of thing, see *Land Charters*, p. civ.

15. *what they erst had suffered* þæt hie ær drugon.

In several places 'erst' seems to be the fittest equivalent for *ær*, a frequent adverbial particle, which cannot always be rendered uniformly. It may not be amiss to observe that 'erst' does not necessarily put a wide interval of time between the present of the narrative and the event referred to: it may be used of events contemplated as quite recent; thus, in *George Wither*:—

As if I in my anger would begin

To break the stool that erst had broke my shin.

*Bouterwek* corrected *þæt* to *þá*, for concord with *fyrenþearfe*:—'The hard calamity which,' &c.

18 a. *Beowulf* (i. e. *Beaw*) was renowned: *Béowulf* wæs breme.

Here it must be noted that this *Beowulf* is not the hero of the poem, but a mythic progenitor of the *Scylding* dynasty, who in the *Sax.*

Chron. A. 855 is written *Beow*. Below, line 53, he is Beowulf of the Scyldings;—whereas the hero of this poem is Beowulf of the Goths.

18 *b.* *his fame sprang wide; heir of Scyld in the Scedelands.*

This represents the text as it stood in Heyne's ed. 4:—

Beówulf wæs breme (blæd wide sprang),  
Scyldes eafera Scede-landum in.

But in ed. 5 it stands thus:—

Beówulf wæs breme, blæd wide sprang  
Scyldes eaferan Scede-landum in.

i. e. wide sprang the fame of Scyld's offspring in the Scedelands.

The correction of the nominative *eafera* to the genitive *eaferan* was made by Kemble, and it was recently advocated by Sievers (Beitr. ix. 135), who compared the opening of *Fata Apostolorum*, which looks like a reminiscence of our text:—

. . . . . Lof wide sprang  
miht and mærdō ofer middangeard  
þeodnes þegna, þrym unlytel.

19. *in the Scedelands*: Scedelandum in.

This archaic formula gives the geographic motto to the poem. It is as much as to say,—‘The scene is in Scandinavia.’ The same realm is called *Scedenig*, 1866; which is generally supposed to mean Scania in Sweden. I had thought that perhaps a reminiscence of this geographical term might survive in Shetland, which has this physical feature in common with the Danish realm, that it consists of an archipelago of islands. I thought accordingly that ‘Scedelandum in’ might mean in the Scattered or broken lands. See Skeat, vv. Scatter, Shed. But in the *Historical Review* (1887) Dr. Vigfusson's theory appeared, which explains ‘Shetland’ through the Icelandic form *Hjaltland*, as meaning land of the ‘Caledonians.’

20–25. Here we have in its earliest extant form what afterwards became a commonplace of the romances of chivalry, namely, that the prince must win to his banner good knights by his bounty. Thus it is expressed in the French Romance of Guy of Warwick:—

bons cheualers mult ama,  
riches douns souent lur dona;  
pur ceo fu cremu e dote,  
e par tut le rengne preise:

which in the English version became:—

Good knyghtis he loued ywis,  
And freely he gaue them of hys,  
Therefore welbelouyd he was,  
And grettly doubted in euery place.



21. *while in his father's nurture.*

Of the five emendations proposed for this mutilated place, four carry the sense here given.

24. *and that men may do his bidding: léode gelæsten.*

Heyne takes *léode* for an acc. fem. meaning *Leute*, people, followers, governed by *gelæsten*, 'that willing comrades may, in the event of war, guarantee him men.' In his metrical translation (1863) it runs thus:—

dass wieder zu ihm willige Gefährten  
im Alter stehen, ihm Gefolge stellen,  
bricht Krieg herein;—

I apprehend *léode* to be a nom. pl. like *burhware*, standing in apposition to *wil gesíðas*. And I am inclined to take this form, in nearly every place of its occurrence in this poem, as a plural masculine, either nom. or acc.;—e.g. 192, 260, 362, 415, 443, 1213, 1336, 1345, 2125.

43 ff. *Not at all with less gifts, &c.: Nalæs hí hine lássan, &c.*

This is irony; not the derisive, bitter, mocking irony of hatred and aversion, as in 793 and 841, but a stately, sedate, and reverential irony. By a slow, indirect, circuitous, intricate, and ornate movement, it says, that having arrived destitute he was sent back with all the funereal pomp of wealth and royalty.

47. *a gold-wrought banner: segen gyldenne.*

That is, made of or intermixed with threads of gold wire, like the fringes of the Taplow find.

48 b. *They let the holm bear him: léton holm beran.*

Here I have ventured to retain a word which has long been silent in our literature. It is pretty clear that the common meaning of this word was hill or mountain, and so it appears twice in the *Heliand*, and in our poem in the compound *holm clif*, 230, 1421, 1635. From the figure of a mountain it passed to the waves of the sea; and also to the sea as a whole, perhaps because it rises to the landsman's eye like a rising country. Such are the only uses of the simple word *holm* in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

In the Scandinavian languages the word takes another line, and passes from the sense of hill, to a rock or island in the sea, and hence our Steep Holmes and Flat Holmes in the estuary of the Severn.

49. *gave him over to ocean: géafon on gársecg.*

The poet leaves us not in any doubt as to the final disposal of the dead in these high obsequies of the golden age; and we may ask whether this completeness of description is simply due to the natural action of the poetic genius, or whether there is not here something of contrast with the degenerate ceremonial of a later age. We know from

Scandinavian graves that at length this ritual shrank into a state of symbolism, that the illustrious dead were still buried in ships, with their bows to sea-ward; that they were however not sent to sea, but were either burnt in that position, or mounded over with earth. See Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, c. xix; and compare line 3010 note.

51. *heads of Halls*: sele rædende. Kemble's emendation; the MS. has *rædenne*. See note on 1346.

52. Compare Tennyson, *The Passing of Arthur*:—

But when that moan had past for evermore,  
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn  
Amazed him, and he groan'd *The King is gone*.  
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,  
*From the great deep to the great deep he goes*.

There is a complete analogy between Scyld and Arthur; both arrive from the unknown in their infancy, and both are shipped away to the unknown after death.

The passing of Scyld, 26-52, is the best-preserved picture that time has spared us out of Teutonic heathendom;—I am almost prompted to surmise that it is the most archaic thing extant in all literature. It reflects the age of bronze; for then it was that the mighty dead *were* so shipped away, as may be gathered from the shrunken rite of sepulture in a mounded ship with head to sea. Before such a ritual could grow, the idea that death was a voyage must have ripened into a doctrine, and here we seem to find adit to the religious thought of the bronze age.

The reminiscence of this archaic rite found new soil in the legend of St. James of Compostella. The body of the apostle was deposited on a ship, and sent off to sea; and the ship, guided by an angel, made for Galicia. There the body was buried, and the burial-place was forgotten until miraculously revealed in the year 800. Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, i. 210.

That life is a journey or a voyage, is a familiar allegory, and there is a beautiful early expansion of this thought by Cynewulf in a poem which I have quoted in my *Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 229. But that death is a voyage is not so frequent, and therefore it is peculiarly interesting to see at the end of the last publication of our octogenarian Laureate this poetic simile in a lyric of most musical verses, swelling into a poet's last utterance of faith:—

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,



But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
 Too full for sound and foam,  
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
 And after that the dark!  
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
 The flood may bear me far,  
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
 When I have crost the bar.

*Demeter and other Poems*, by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1889.

53. *Beowulf of the Scyldings*: Béowulf Scyldinga.

To be carefully distinguished from the hero of this poem, who is Béowulf Géata, Beowulf of the Goths.

62. In this place the manuscript shows no break, but the imperfect versification indicates that the scribe has missed something. I have translated Heyne's text based upon Grein's emendation: but other corrections have been proposed. Grundvig suggested that *elan* was not a complete name but only the remnant of [On]*elan*, that the name of the princess is lost, and that she was the consort, not of Ongentheow, but of his son Onela. Bugge (*Tidskrift* viii. 43) accepted this, and proposed the reading, *hýrde ic þæt [N. or M. was On]elan cwén Heaðoscilfingas healsgebedda*.

68 ff. Compare:—

Stately and beautiful he bade them build,  
 So that in all the earth no marvel was  
 Like Vishramvan, the Prince's pleasure-place.

Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*, Book ii.

73. *except people's land and lives of men*.

This has the air of a corrective insertion. Grote, ii. 86 n, points out that Aristotle quoted (*Polit.* iii. 9, 2) words from the speech of Agamemnon in the *Iliad*—*πὰρ γὰρ ἐμοὶ θάνατος* (life and death are in my power)—which are not in our copies; and he adds, that the Alexandrine critics effaced many traces of the old manners. I do not suggest that our text has here been tampered with by a later hand, but rather that our poet was careful of the lessons his poem might convey, and that in working up the traditional material, he corrected what might seem to infringe the constitutional principles of his own day. The rudiment of the principle here asserted is found in *Germania*, 7; where it said that the king has

not an indefinite or arbitrary power—*nec regibus infinita aut libera potestas*.

74. *Then I heard of*: þā ic wīde gefrægn.

An epic formula to introduce a statement purporting to be traditional. It appears in the opening sentence of the poem as its governing phrase. Often it is inserted parenthetically, and in the form of an abstract substantive, *mīne gefræge*, my information, my story, as in 776, 837, 1955.

So in Dante, *Inferno*, xxxi. 3; *Così od'io*, &c. 'Thus I have heard that the lance of Achilles, and of his father, used to be occasion, first of sad, and then of healing gift.' Tr. John A. Carlyle.

77. *with a quickness surprizing to men*: ædre mid yldum.

This seems to mean 'quickly in the apprehension of men,' so as to surprize men, like Melusine's castle in the Romance of Partenay 1132:—

Of it meruelyd strongly the contray,  
hou ful sone men maid this said strong repair:

and again *ibid.* 1153-5, even more distinctly.

84. *son-in-law and father-in-law*: áðum-swerian. See note on 1164.

86 a. *outcast creature*.

Here I have not hesitated to adopt Rieger's emendation of *ellor gast* in place of *ellen gast*.

86 b. *with torture*: earfoðlice.

From *earfoð* the cognate of G. *arbeit*, labour, toil. See a good account of this whole group in the New Dictionary (ed. Dr. Murray), v. *Arveth*.

89. *loud sounding in hall*: hlúdne in healle.

Compare the half-line in Heliand 2742 a, *hlud an thero hallu*, where the antecedent substantive is *gaman*, a good parallel, though hardly a full equivalent of our *dréam*. Below, 3021, we have *gamen ond gléo dréam*. This word *dréam* conveys the buzz and hum of social happiness, and more particularly the sound of music and singing, to which the narrative now proceeds. See note on 3021.

90 b-98. This is one of those passages for which our poem suffers under rather vague charges of interpolation. The contrast in the source and nature of the material is obvious; but had not a poet of the eighth century equal access to the Christian as to the heathen literature? The striking thing is, how little of Christian he has taken, and this is a mark of deliberate purpose. If we talk, as some people do, of this poem being a work of the second or third or fourth century, imported to this country with the English colonization, then such a passage as this must be called an interpolation. But if it is simply an English Epic of the eighth century, I find it quite natural that a Christian poet of that time, while intending to keep mainly on the lines of the old



poetry and to draw his materials therefrom, should take a Hymn of Creation for a sample of the music that tortured the demon, and also as the first musical overture of an Epic which, whatever its material, is in spirit Christian.

93. *the fair and bright plain* : wlite beorhtne wang.

The word *wang* is as general as the Latin *campus*, but as this word could be used with a specific allusion to the Campus Martius, so it is possible that *wang* in this place is selected allusively to *neorxna wang* the old phrase for Walhalla. In 2 Cor. xii. 4 the Mæso-Gothic version has for Paradise simply *wagg*, which is the same word.

99. *Thus they, the warrior-band, &c.* : Swá þá driht guman, &c., &c.

There is a very remarkable and striking parallel in the Third Book of the *Paradise Lost* ; where after the angelic Hymn of Praise this comes:—

Thus they in heaven, above the starry sphere,  
 Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.  
 Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe  
 Of this round world, whose first convex divides  
 The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed  
 From Chaos, and the inroad of darkness old,  
 Satan alighted walks : \* \* \*  
 \* \* \*  
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night  
 Starless, exposed, and ever-threat'ning storms  
 Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky ;  
 \* \* \*  
 Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field.

100. *until that one began* : oð þæt án ongan.

This is the proper beginning about Grendel ; and the same formula opens the subject of the Dragon, 2210. The vague anticipation of 86 ff. need not have caused the uneasiness it has to some of the critics. Something very like a second introduction takes place also in the case of the Dragon, 2271.

101. *a fiend in the hall* : féond on healle.

The emendation of *healle* for *helle* of the MS., made by S. Bugge in Paul und Braune xii, is so simple, and gives so much relief, that I have not hesitated to adopt it. Compare 142. [Heyne has adopted it in his ed. 5.]

109. *violence* : fáhðe.—Gen. sing. of *fáhð*, fem. abstract of *fáh*, foe. This *fáhð* is the pure and original form of our hybrid *feud*, in the sense of an old family quarrel, which seems to have been influenced in shape by confusion with *feodum*, fief, and the adjective *feudal*. In 2948, 2999, I have been able to translate it by 'feud.'

111. *strange broods* : untydras.

This exactly answers to the 'monstrous growths' of the following passage:—

. . . . . so brave, so strong,  
Fired with such burning hate of powerful ill,  
So loving of the race, so swift to raise  
The fearless arm and mighty club, and smite  
All monstrous growths with ruin.

*The Epic of Hades, 'Deianeira.'*

120. *desolation of men*: wonsecaft wera.

Here I keep to the text of Heyne's fourth edition, and the clear reading of the manuscript. In the fifth he has adopted *wera[s]*, an emendation by Sievers. This would make the clause to mean, *the men knew not care nor misery*.

131. *majestic rage*: þrýð swyð.

This has often been taken as an adjective, 'der volkkühne Fürst trug Fülle des Harmes,' Ettmüller (1840); and so Müllenhoff, 'er duldete kraft-stark, degen-kummer er litt,' *Beowulf Untersuchungen* (1889), p. 113. According to this construction it would mean, 'he suffered with majestic dignity.' But this rests on the ground that the word is a compound of the adjective *swýð*, strong, mighty. More likely it is (as long ago indicated by Grein) cognate with Icel. *sviði*, which Vigfusson renders 'a burn, the smart from burning;' and he adds the compound *brjost-sviði*, heart-burn. Again below, 736.

138. *Then was it not hard to find &c.*: þá wæs éað fynde &c.

An ironical litotes, to indicate a general panic and desertion of the hall. In plain prose it would be something like that in Sax. Chr. C. 1010, ælc fléah swá he mæst mihte.

140. *a bed among the castle-bowers*: bed æfter búrum.

A bed somewhere in the range of buildings attached to the hall. The expansiveness of the preposition *after* makes itself felt here. Grein renders, ein Bett in den Gebäuden: Simrock, ein Bett in den Bauten. They had shrunk into stables and corners, or (143) fled the place entirely, so that it had become almost a solitude.

142. *the malice of the hell-thane*: hel þegnes hete.

The MS. has *healþegnes*, but long ago Ettmüller proposed to read *hel*, and this emendation has lately been revived by Prof. S. Bugge.

158. *beorhtre* is not a Comparative, as Thorpe (1855) and Heyne (1863) took it; but a genitive feminine after *wénan*. This epithet recalls the Homeric ἀγλά' ἄποινα, as in *Iliad*, i. 111.

162 b. *men do not know &c.*: men ne cunnon &c.

Compare *Paradise Regained*, i. 358:—

'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,  
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt



Kept not my happy Station, but was driv'n  
 With them from bliss to the bottomless deep;  
 Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd  
 By rigour unconniving, but that oft  
 Leaving my dolorous Prison I enjoy  
 Large Liberty to round this Globe of Earth,  
 Or range in th' Air; nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns  
 Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.

175-188. This unique and striking passage dates the time and place of the poet relatively to the times of heathenism from which the narrative is a survival. He says in effect, 'The people were heathen at the time of my story, and we live under very different conditions now; though even now, there are unhappy folk, who are obstinate adherents to the old blank hopelessness of heathendom.' Already in the opening lines he had intimated that he was going to tell a tale of long ago, but that was not sufficient to inform us whether the poet were a heathen or a Christian. We might have gathered it indeed from the whole tone and treatment; but this passage, and this only, declares explicitly the position of the poet.

Not very unlike this is the disavowal of heathendom at the close of *Troilus and Creseyde*. Chaucer had told a heathen tale in heathen wise, more so, in fact, than our poet here; but he will not dismiss his theme without at least one abjurant stanza:—

Lo! here of paynims cursed olde rites!  
 Lo! here what all their goddes may avail!  
 Lo! here this wrecched worldes appetites!  
 Lo! here the fine [end] and guerdon for travail  
 Of Jove, Apollo, Mars, and such rascaille!  
 Lo! here the form of olde clerkes speche  
 In poetry, if ye their bokes seche!

177. *that the Goblin-queller would afford them relief: þæt him gást bona géoce gefremede.*

Ettmüller: 'dass der Geisttilger ihnen helfe;' adding that probably Thor the ancient foe of the Giant brood is intended by *gást bona*.

Professor George Stephens had come to the same conclusion independently, as he tells us in an interesting discussion of this passage, in his *Thunor*, p. 54 sqq. He remarks that *gást* was a word of vague signification varying in sense from *man* to *monster*. He therefore translates '*gást bona*' as Giant-killer, a Kenning for Thunor; and refers to Gröndal, *Clavis Poetica Antiquæ Linguae Septentrionalis*, 8vo. Hafniæ, 1864, for nearly forty similar epithets of the old god Thor.

189. *with the trouble of that time: mæl ceare.*

I take *mæl ceare* here as in the instrumental case, contrary to Heyne, who both here and in the similar instance *mód ceare*, 1992, sees an accusative governed by *séað*, which he thus makes a transitive verb = 'seethed that care.' There are instances of this transitive use, but the intransitive use is older, and seems to me the true one in both these places. He appears to have changed his mind deliberately, for in 1863 he translated very much as I still translate:—'So wallte auf das Herz des Königs Hrodgar || die ganze Zeit in Sorgen.'

197. *in the day of this life*: on þæm dæge þysses lifes.

In the case of this epic formula here and below, 790, 806, Heyne departs from his practice of rendering a line for a line, and dispatches it with a little phrase, 'hier auf Erden,' here on earth.

200. *over the swan-road*: ofer swan ráde.

This compound occurs also in *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*, once in each poem; but beyond this, there is only one notice of the swan in A. S. poetry, viz. *swanes feðre*, *Phenix* 137. Was it a native of this island, or of the continental mother country? It is said to breed wild now no further away than the North of Sweden.

204. *they observed auguries*: hæl scéawedon.

In Mr. Madan's Old Saxon glosses to Virgil, from Bibl. Bodl. Auct. F. i. 16: *omine* in *Æn.* xi. 589 is rendered *hele*.

In the eighth century vocabulary of the Parker Library (No. cxliv), there is '*Auspiciantur*, hælseadon,' Wülcker 8, 3;—'*Augur* hælsera, 8, 5; '*Omen*, hæl,' 36, 2; '*Extipices*, hælsent,' 20, 33.

Other glossaries in Wülcker give '*Divinatio, prophetia, diuinitas*, halsung,' 224, 26 [read *hælsung*]; '*Extipices, auruspices*, halseras [hælseras], 231, 29;—'*Extipices, aruspices*, hælsendas, 393, 14;—'*Aruspicum*, galdercræfta oððe hælsera,' 342, 40;—'*Auguria*, hælsung,' 348, 24. I apprehend the word is used in this sense in the plant-name *hælwyrt*, A. S. '*Pollegia*, broðerwyrt, hælwyrt, dweorges dwostle,' 300, 24.

On the manner of taking the auguries, see *Germania*, 10.

212. *mounted on the prow*: on stefn stigon.

The ancients 'mounted' their ships, ἀνέβησαν, as they mounted on horseback:—οἱ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἀναβάντες ἐπέπλεον ὑγρὰ κέλευθα. *Iliad*, i. 312.

217. *urged by the wind, most like to a bird*: winde gefýsed . . fugle gelicost.

Compare Byron, *Corsair*, i. 17:—

Meantime the steady breeze serenely blew,  
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew.

217 f. With this description of a ship scudding merrily before the wind, join a slightly varied one below, 1905, and the following will appear like a modern expansion of these sketches:—



Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,  
 She bounds before the gale,  
 The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch  
 Is joyous in her sail!  
 With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,  
 The cords and canvas strain,  
 The waves, divided by her force,  
 In rippling eddies chased her course,  
 As if they laugh'd again.  
 Not down the breeze more blithely flew,  
 Skimming the wave, the light sea-mew,  
 Than the gay galley bore  
 Her course upon that favouring wind,  
 And Coolin's crest has sunk behind,  
 And Slapin's cavern'd shore.

*The Lord of the Isles*, iv. 7.

219. *in due time*: ymb án tíð.

This is a phrase that has given a great deal of trouble, and the difficulty has been aggravated by the German readiness to resort to the remedy of a hyphen; out of the hyphenated form Ettmüller drew the mechanical sense *Zur Einzeit*; and well might he append the query, 'Einzeit; welche Stunde ist gemeint?' The accepted doctrine now is, that *an-tíð* is for 'and-tíð,' corresponding time; and this would make the voyagers arrive at the same hour of the second day, having been twenty-four hours afloat. (So Heyne, ed. 5.) Thorpe took *tíð* as 'hour';—'till that about an hour of the second day,' which, even if it could be thought to give the sense of *tíð*, certainly does not give the sense of *ymb*.

I venture to think that we ought to look rather at the phrase than at the words. Verbally taken, the words mean 'at the end of a time,' but when worn into a current phrase of elastic usage, it would be like 'in course of time, at length, in due time.' Then the next words, *ódres dógores*, are not dependent, but exegetical.

237. *Who are ye &c.*: Hwæt syndon ge &c.

As to the interrogative pronoun, it is to be observed that this neuter *Hwæt* is the equivalent to the *Who* of our present usage, and the true rendering is not 'What are ye?' but 'Who are ye?'

So in *Sir Tristrem* (ed. Scott), Fytte ii. stanza 8:—

Amorwe, when it was day,  
 The leuedi of heighe priis,  
 Com ther Tristrem lay,  
 And asked what he is?

240 b. *Long time have I been in fort.*

I adopt Bugge's emendation : *hider ofer holmas?* [*Hwile ic on weal*] *le was endesáta.*

245. *the pass-word* : *léafnes word.*

Zupitza in his transliteration of the Facsimile edits *ge-leafnes-word*. The manner of a pass-word is seen in *Redgauntlet*, ii. 6 :—' But old Turnpenny will answer no question on such a subject without you give him the pass-word, which at present you must do, by asking him the age of the moon ; if he answers, " Not light enough to land a cargo," you are to answer, " Then plague on Aberdeen Almanacks," and upon that he will hold free intercourse with you.'

247. *confidential token of kinsmen* : *mâga gemêdu.*

See my *Land Charters*, Glossarial Index, v. *gemêde* and *gemêdo.*

249 b. *he is no mere goodman* : *nis þæt seld guma.*

Compare *Marmion*, i. 5 :—

Well by his visage you might know  
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,  
\*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,  
Shew'd him no carpet knight so trim,  
But in close fight a champion grim,  
In camps a leader sage.

In the romantic fiction of his life, with which the wily Ulysses renders an account of himself to the first enquiries of the swine-herd, he says that in his youth he was never fond of labour nor devoted to the interests of household life (*οὐδ' οἰκωφελίη*), but arms and the terrors of battle were ever his delight. *Odyssey*, xiv. 223.

No one, so far as I know, adopts Grein's rendering of *seld guma* as a man who sticks to the house, Stubenhocker. This (I suppose) would mean something like 'carpet-knight,' as above in Scott, and also in *The Lady of the Lake*, v. 14 :—

I . . . hold your valour light  
As that of some vain carpet-knight.

Bugge takes it as retainer, one who is attached to the hall or court of a lord. So that the coast-warden would say : 'The man in the handsome armour is no mere *húscarl*, he is himself a chief man.'

I prefer Heyne's view, which makes the antithesis the same as the old one between *miles* and *paganus*, between knight and burgher or citizen, between *gentilhomme* and *bourgeois*. And this idea seems best represented by 'goodman.' In favour of Prof. Bugge's view, is the fact that *seld* in Epic language is mostly used of noble buildings ; but in medieval documents, on the other hand, it is repeatedly used of burgage tenements, as may be seen in Wood's *City of Oxford*, lately edited by the Rev. Andrew Clark.



253. *as explorers at large* : léas[e] scéaweras.

This is MG. laus, our modern *loose*. So that it expresses the idea of 'on the loose'—free to reconnoitre, and explore unrestrained. Such is the received interpretation; and Heyne has followed Ettmüller in clinching the adjective by completing its plural form. But why should it not be genitive of *léah* used vaguely for country as it is in Cod. Dipl. 1322, where also this genitive form occurs?

255 *b. ye hear my plain meaning* : minne ge hýrað.

So I would read—not *gehýrað*. The compound verb has a distinct shade of meaning.

275. *a mysterious author of deeds* : deogol dæd háta.

Of all the translators I find but one who has made any attempt at an adequate rendering here, and that is Grein (1857)—'ein düsterer Thatan-stifter,' which I have followed as well as I could. This sense requires the reading *háta*, which he also suggested (as in *béo háta* bee master); not *hata*, as all the books have. The point is of importance; the expression is absolutely unique; and if such intense compounds are dispatched by vague and diluted phrases, some of the firmest and most definite lines of the picture escape us. This touch informs us that the visitant had never been seen; he was only known by the revolting traces of his visits.

289. *he who hath a sense of duty* : se þe wel þenceð.

He who is well affected to his master; he who has a duteous mind. Compare 2601.

292. *weeds* : gewædu.

All through the middle ages, suits of armour are called 'weeds.'

He purveyed him thre noble stedis  
And also thre noble wedys.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Blake than was that other stede,  
The same colour was his wede.

Weber, ii. 304.

Anone he toke the knyghtis stede,  
And armyd hym in his wede.

Ib. 346.

299 *b. is it given* : gifeðe bið.

I would take this, not in a future sense, 'shall be;' but as the predication of a general law: 'To such a warrior it is (usually and naturally) given to be a happy warrior.' Or, if we emphasize *swylcum*, 'Such the warrior to whom it is given to come unharmed out of the struggle.'

303. *the boar-figures shone, &c.* : coferlíc scíonon, &c.

This is no part of the legend, but the poet's own pictorial work. A like incident caught the eye of *The Times* correspondent at the brilliant affair of Bomarsund, Aug. 8, 1854. He wrote thus: 'As each regiment landed, they formed in order on the rocky shore, and marched

through the thick pine forest, and over the heights, their bayonets and red caps glistening in the morning sun.' *The Times*, Aug. 23, 1854.

This boar-crest on the helmet appears again 1112 and 1287 and 1454. For the connection between boar and helmet in the OHG. name *epur-helm* or *eparhelm*, see Grimm, *Myth.* 195. It is probably traceable too in the Alfred Jewel. There exists an example of an early helmet which was dug up in England at Benty Grange, in which on the crossing of the metal ribs there stands an iron boar with bronze eyes. Figured in Lindenschmit, *Merow. Alterth.* p. 256. (Lehmann, *Brünne und Helm*, p. 25.)

Our heroes wear a boar in their helmet. Tacitus, *Germania*, 45, makes much of boar-figures as worn by the *Æstii* on the Baltic coast. It was the symbol of their goddess, and they had great faith in it as a preservative from hard knocks.

The solid courage of the boar was admired and contrasted with the trickery of the fox. In Asser's *Life of Alfred*, the king fights like a boar (*aprimo more*), but the Danes like foxes (*vulpino more*). *Mon. Hist. Brit.* 476 D and 473 B.

Here we seem to have an intimation of the later 'crest' of Heraldry, of which Gower says:—

And on his head there stood upright  
A crest, in token of a knight.

These boar-figures were in the nature of jewellery. In the *Chanson de Roland*, a poem of the eleventh century, line 1452, an advancing army is characterized by the flashing of the sun on the gems and gold of the helmets: *Luisent cil helme as pierres d'or gemmées*, which is thus rendered by the editor, M. Léon Gautier, into modern French: *Au soleil reluisent les pierreries et l'or des heaumes*. In good Epic fashion this line recurs in 3306, and there the same editor turns it somewhat differently: *Voyez-vous luire ces heaumes couverts de pierreries et d'or?*

Such crests in helmets are very ancient. In *Æneid*, vii. 785, Turnus wears the figure of Chimæra. The crest of Marmion (poetic date A. D. 1513) is a falcon. Canto i. Stanza 6. Tasso's Clorinda has a tigress.

A savage tigress on her helmet lies,  
The famous badge Clorinda us'd to bear.  
*The Recovery of Jerusalem*, ii. 38.

304. *cheek-guards*: *hleor bergan*.

The MS. reading, *hléor beran*, has made much ado; and Gering's happy suggestion *hléor bergan*, cheek-protectors, affords a remedy. A bronze disk (*bronzescheibe*) found at Öland in Sweden represents two



warriors in helmets with boars as their crests, and cheek-guards under; these are the *hléor beŕgan*. Antiq. Tidsk. f. Sverige viii. 1, p. 41. Bugge in Paul und Braune, xii. 1, p. 26.

306. *they raged along*: grummon.

Mr. Arnold has 'they tore along;' but I prefer a word which admits the association of a roaring sound. See Bosworth-Toller, v. grimman.

311. *the gleam of it shot over many lands*: lixte se léoma ofer landa fela.—Something like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream—'the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth.' Daniel iv. 11.

315. *spake a parting word*: word æfter spræc.—'—scheint der Sinn zu sein: sprach zurück, zurückgewendet.' Moritz Heyne.

320. *The street was stone-paven; the path guided*: Stræt wæs stán fáh, stíg wisode.

Here we have manifestly before our eyes one of those ancient causeways, which are among the oldest visible institutions of civilization. The world-spanning roads of the Romans, were but grander specimens of the primitive causeway. The original type of it is well preserved in many a village church-path. Some however (I know not how many), have of late years been improved away by the acceleration of modern progress, which makes villagers ready to welcome the town-like asphalt; and Highway Boards are only too ready to gratify them. I am proud to say that I have been instrumental in arresting the doom of one such paven way. In early times there was something sacred about these causeways; pious benefactors left money in wills to sustain them, just as they did for bridges. In a will of A. D. 1430, after a legacy to the High Altar, and others to lights at special shrines, it continues: 'Item to Twykenham brygge iiiid.; Item to Kyngston brigge vid.; Item to the causy at Wyke iiiid.;' from *The Fifty Earliest English Wills*, ed. Furnivall (E.E.T.S., 1882), where the editor interprets *causy* as 'raizd way,' and I take occasion to observe that this is the idea which I attach to *stíg* akin to *stígan* ascend, not as if a mountain path, but a path raised above the mud. The *medo-stíg* along which the king and queen proceeded (924) was such an elevated causy. Compare *Andreas*, 987, stóp on stræte, stíg wisode, which looks like a reminiscence of this.

325. They deposited their shields and spears outside; this is reiterated 397 f.; but they kept-on their body-armour, and they were admitted (by and bye) to Hrothgar with their helmets on their heads. Swords are not noticed at this stage of the narrative.

The deposit of weapons outside before entering a house was the rule at all periods. In *The Boke of Curtesye*, E. E. T. S. (about 1430), it is prescribed thus:—

When thou comis to a lordis ȝate,  
 The porter þou shalle fynde ther ate;  
 Take hym thou shalt þy wepyn tho,  
 And aske hym leue in to go.

In provincial Swedish almost everywhere a church porch is called VÅKENHUS, instead of the 'correct' VAPENHUS (for this consonantal change see Rydquist, Svenska Språkets Lagar, vol. iv. p. 239), i.e. weapon-house, because the worshippers deposited their arms there before they entered the church, and this is only an eminent example of a general rule before entering a house which had a *frið*. I am indebted for this illustration to my friend Professor George Stephens, of Copenhagen.

326 a. *bucklers mortal hard*: rondas regn hearde.

This rendering seems to require a word of apology. It is an attempt to find an equivalent for the sentiment of the compound *regn heard*. The prefix *regn* is the same as the Mæso-Gothic *ragin*, counsel, and the Icelandic *regin* the gods, which occurs only in the old Edda songs, and there in nom. and acc. pl. only. There are in A. S. literature three extant compounds with *regn*, two in this poem (770), and one in Cædmon. In these instances it has an enhancing power to an extreme pitch, and I have been able to find no better equivalent for *regn heard* than 'mortal hard.' The OHG. form *reginhart* passed into France as a descriptive name for the fox; became popular through the Flemish beast-epic of *Reinaerde*; and at length from a proper name became in France the common noun for fox, ousting the vernacular *goupil* (*vulpecula*). In English literature Reynard is still only a sort of proper name.

333. *damasked shields*: fætte scyldas.

Now Turnus arms for fight! his back and breast,  
 Well-temper'd steel, and scaly brass invest:  
 The cuishes which his brawny thighs infold  
 Are mingled metal damask'd o'er with gold.

Dryden, *Aeneid*, xi.

The will of Francis Fitton, dated 31 March, 1608, contains a bequest to 'Mr. William Pollewheele who married with my nece Mrs. Marie Fitton . . . my vsual riding sword being damasked commonly called a fauchion and my best horse or gelding of mine to his owne best liking as a remembrance and token of my loue to him, and to his new wief.' *The Academy*, 15 December, 1888.

336. *esquire*: ombiht.—See 673, where the particular office of an esquire is discharged by an *ombeht þegn*.

342. *firm under helmet*: heard under helme.

This description occurs once more, in 404, and in both places it is said of Beowulf; meaning that he had a firm strong visage under his helmet.



Compare Shaks. *Coriolanus*, i. 3. 60, 'confirmed countenance.' A different portrait in the same frame is presented in the following lines :—

..... it was Gunnar that stood before her face,  
And his war-gear darkened the noon-tide, and the grey helm gleamed  
from his head,  
But his eyes were fearful beneath it.

W. Morris, *Sigurd*, Book iii.

We seem to see the well-set tranquil aspect of the youthful countenance, looking as a Sicilian chronicler (quoted in Dean Plumptre's notes on *Purgatorio* iii.) said of Manfred, 'homo firmus amæna facie,' and we ask ourselves;—Is this only native simplicity, or is it the art that looks like it?

343 *a.* *table-fellows*: *béod genéatas*.

The term occurs again below (1713) in the episode of Heremód. It is the predecessor title to that of the Knights of the Table Round.

343 *b.* *my name is Beowulf*: *Béowulf is mín nama*.

Compare *Sir Bevis*, 3493 (E. E. T. S. xlviii. p. 164):—

þe king askede him, what he were  
And what nedes a wolde þere.  
þanne answerde Beoun;  
Ichatte Beues of Hamtoun . . . .

367 *b.* *benignant*: *glædman*.

Prof. Sophus Bugge holds that the gloss '*Hilaris glædman*' is decisive, and forbids us to think of correcting with Grein *glæd man*, or of inventing a substantive *glædma*. Heyne had adopted Thorkelin's correction *glædnian*, which was supported by Rieger, but in ed. 5 he half returns to the MS., adopting Grein's *glæd man*.

369. *reverence*: *geæhtlan*.—Gen. sing. 'hochschätzung.' Bugge.

371. *supreme of Scyldings*: *helm Scyldinga*.—Literally, helmet of Scyldings. The same figure occurs in Shakspeare, *Antony*, i. 5. 24, where Cleopatra vaunts Antony to be:—

The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm  
And burgonet of men.

372. *when he was a page*: *cniht wesende*.

Here, and in all the other places where *cniht* occurs in this poem, it seems to carry that technical sense which it bore in the military hierarchy for a long period before it bloomed out in the full sense of *knight*. I understand it as used of a noble youth who is placed out and learning the elements of the art of war, in the service of a qualified warrior, to whom he is, in a military sense, a servant. I think this interpretation

applies also in the other places, 535, 1219. We are driven to translate it by the word that succeeded to its place when it had moved up. Thus Alisaunder 835 :—

To knyght, to page, and to jogleris.

373. *good old father* : eald fæder.

Hyphens are risky toys to play with, in fixing texts of pre-hyphenial antiquity. Surely it cannot be right with Heyne and Holder, to make a compound *eald-fæder*; for in that shape it can only mean grand-father. The mischief seems to have begun with Thorpe (1855), and though it did not affect Grein's text which followed soon after (*A. S. Bibliothek*, 1857), yet in his separate edition of our poem (1867) he let it in, though evidently but ill satisfied with it. He rendered the hyphenated compound thus: 'Altvater, Vater, der vor langer Zeit lebte,' and this has kept the ground ever since, being simply repeated by Holder, but improved upon by Heyne. Now, in reason, how long ago at the outside could Beowulf's father have lived, seeing that Beowulf is now but a youngster, and twenty years to an old man like Hrothgar does not count for a long time ago. But Heyne, as I said, goes still further. According to him, the compound requires more ample justification for its existence, and 'vor langer Zeit' is inadequate; so Beowulf's father is 'Vater, der vor langen Zeiten lebte,' a father who lived long ages ago! May I not draw the moral, and say to the diligent student—Question the hyphens?

The wary Grundtvig (1861) did not let in the hyphen, and Grein, as I said, was uneasy about it. For he added this query—'*oder his eald fæder, sein alter Vater?*' Yes, only not as computed by years, but as an emotional epithet, just as now we say 'old fellow.' Doubtless the use of this adj. to fit any emotion is of long standing. In Shaks. *Hen. IV.*: 'we shall have old swearing.'

In 'The Wars of Alexander,' an alliterative romance of the fifteenth century (ed. Skeat, E. E. T. S. Extra, xlvii), line 741, we find in the Dublin text :—

Now by the hert & the heale · of my old fadir . . .

Where the Ashmole text, printed opposite, has this :—

Now be the herte & the hele · of my hathill fadire . . .

so that the 'old' of one text takes a reflected hue of interpretation from the 'hathill,' i. e. *æðele* noble, of the other. In 1885 a lady, the wife of a house-master at one of our great Public Schools, had this said to her one morning by her nurse-maid, who was a native of Bath: 'Did you hear the young gentlemen this morning, ma'am; they were making a fine old noise about half-past seven.'

376. *his grown-up son, that is hither come* : heard hér cumen.



In the south of Gloucestershire, about Cold Ashton and Marshfield, it is a stock phrase to say 'hard boys,' for sons grown up to working age. This word *heard* is closely analogous in the circle of its application to the Homeric *κρατερός* which is *stout, brave*, when applied to men, *hard* when used of weapons, *severe* in relation to circumstances, &c. Indeed, it is the same word *κρατ- καρτ-*. Max Müller, *Chips*, iv. 92.

378. *to the Goths*: Géatum.

Thorpe proposed *Géatum* instead of *Géata*, and Bugge) Paul und Braune, xii) approves. For who is to carry 'thither' the presents 'of' the Géatas? But suppose them to be presents from the Danish king and court to the Geatish king and court, and then it is all simple and easy.

387. *banded friends . . . into my presence*: séon sibbe gedriht.

The *sibbe gedriht* is Beowulf's company; as they are also called below 729. This is not the object to *séon* (as commonly taken) but, as S. Bugge says, it is the subject-accusative to *séon*, and it is governed by *hát*. The object to *séon* is *mé* understood; compare *Hróðgár geséon* in the sequel. Compare also 347, 365. This acute observation is due first to Grein, v. *séon* (1864); and it was afterwards expanded by Prof. S. Bugge, 1886.

396. *with helm on head*: under here gríman.

This permission was a special mark of distinction and honourable reception. So Lord Kingsale, the Premier Baron of Ireland, enjoys the privilege of wearing his hat in the presence of the sovereign, a distinction which is said to date from the reign of king John, and to have been conferred by that king on the De Courcy of the day for some signal service.

425. *single-handed, to champion the quarrel against the giant*: ána gehégan þing við þyrse.

It may be asked—What sense is there in the resolution to fight a monster single-handed? The only desire which such a being provokes is that of his swift destruction. But this is the temper of heroism in romance, and moreover Grendel is not quite treated as utterly outside the pale of humanity; there is something of rivalry in this contest. The jealousy of partnership in exploit belongs to one of the leading ideas of the poem, namely, to exhibit the highest ideal of romantic valour. The achievement must be unshared, the honour undivided:—

For honour travels in a strait so narrow,  
Where one but goes abreast.

W. Shakspeare, *Troilus*, iii. 3. 154.

Compare Fairfax, *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, by Tasso, ii. 23:—

My lofty thoughts, she answer'd him, envied  
Another's hand should work my high desire,  
The thirst of glory can no partner bide,  
With mine own self I did alone conspire.



Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ix. 2, says, 'The soul of chivalry was individual honour, coveted in so entire and absolute a perfection, that it must not be shared.' Compare also 433 ff., 634, 2345.

433-441. There is something strange here; a human hero about to fight a goblin undertakes to observe rules based upon principles of fair play and equality of weapons. I do not quite see to the bottom of it, but it should be remembered, as already observed, that Grendel is not altogether outside the pale of humanity.

435. *I therefore will forgo.*

On the spelling *forgo* (not *forego*) I commend the reader to Skeat, v. *Forgo*.

450 *b. no need wilt thou have &c.*: *nô þu ymb mines &c.*

We find the same sentiment, though in a different mouth, in Scott's novel, *The Betrothed*, c. 29:—'Then let us make a fair sally upon the siegers. Those who can cut their way through will shift well enough; those who fall, will be provided for.'

452. *if Hild take me*: *gif mec hild nime.*

Here I follow Rönning who gives 'hild' a mythological personality, and translates as above 'hvis Hild mig tager.' *Beowulfs-Kvadet*, p. 59.

455 *a. a work of Weland's*: *Welandes geweorc.*

Here Beowulf's royal blood is honoured; a work of Weland had come down to him as an heir-loom; just as a work of Hephaistus had descended from Zeus to Agamemnon in the ancestral sceptre. *Iliad*, ii. 101 sqq.

455 *b. Wyrð goeth ever as she is bound*: *Gæð á Wyrð swá hío scel!*

A fitting conclusion to a speech that is purely heathen. The Christian formula which succeeded to this heathen one may be seen below, 685 ff.

457. *for pledged rescue*: *for [wære] fyhtum.*

After much hesitancy, I have adopted Bugge's emendation in part, and his sense in its entirety. Hrothgar accepts Beowulf as a champion who has come to fulfil an inherited obligation. Many other emendations have been proposed. Heyne's reading in ed. 5 is *For were-fyhtum*, which carries the following sense:—'To fight in defence (of the oppressed), and to win honourable titles, &c.'

480 *b. when refreshed with beer*: *béore druncne.*

It would be a mistranslation to render this 'drunken'; compare 1231. If a stronger expression is demanded, we might render it merry, flushed, high-flown.

488. *of trusty lieges*: *déorre duguðe.*

Duguð is an abstract noun from the verb *dugan* to be capable. We have already had it twice before, once in opposition to the youngsters *geogoð* 160, and once in its vague use for nobility 359. In the present passage we have it in that relation which is of first importance in this poem, namely, in relation to the king. The *duguð*, the mature and ripe warriors, the aristocracy of the nation, are the support of the throne;—they are



at this period what the order of knighthood is at a later date. The word, though now extinct, and represented only by its adjective 'doughty,' continued in romantic poetry for many centuries. In the alliterative romance of *The Wars of Alexander* (E. E. T. S., Extra Series, xlvii), which the editor (Skeat) assigns to the fifteenth century, it occurs repeatedly in the form *douth*, of which he gives sixteen references in his Glossary. See note on 1190 a.

489 f. *Sit now to banquet, and merrily share the feast, brave captain, with (thy) fellows, as thy mind moves thee.* Site nú tó symle, and on sál meoto || sigehréð secgum, swá þín sefa hwette !

I regard *on sál* as a phrase equivalent to, if not a corrupt reading for, *on salum*. The next word (whatever its precise meaning), I take as an imperative governing *secgum*.

A difficult passage which has been variously rendered. Kemble (1837) thus: 'and joyfully eat exulting in victory among *my* warriors.' Thorpe (1855) thus: 'and unbind with mead *thy* valiant breast with *my* warriors.' This 'unbind with mead' is based on an emendation, *meodo*, which Thorpe accepted from Bouterwek (*Haupts Zeitschrift*, xi. 81), who proposed *on sál meodo* entbinde mit Meth. Grein (1857) also adopted this; but in his edition of 1867 he returned to *meoto*, the MS. reading, and gave his adhesion to a suggestion by Leo, that *meoto* was connected with *mete* = measure. On these lines it would be an invitation to Beowulf and his men to make themselves quite at home, and not stand upon ceremony. This rendering involves the taking *sigehréð secgum* as a compound, which is a great price to pay. Thus Grein: entfessele den Siegruhms-männern d. i. deinen Mannen das maaszvolle etikettenmäsige Benehmen.

We have a good parallel passage at 1783, where a speech by the same speaker closes with a like invitation. Beowulf is to go to table with his men, for they had talked enough of troubles (*nú*); and the only doubt is whether the recreation of free talk is also recommended.

494. *in the pride of their strength*: þryðum dealle.

On this lost adj. *deal*, which is now known to signify 'proud, elated, exulting,' see Grimm's note to *Andreas*, 1097, where the meaning of it was first cleared up (1840). Lye had taken it to mean 'void of, destitute of,' and this error has not quite disappeared from the books.

497. *there was social merriment*: þær væs hæleða dréam.

But the merriment must have had an undersong of care, like that in *The Lord of the Isles*, ii. 1:—

Fill the bright goblet, spread the festive board !

Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair !

Through the loud hall in joyous concert pour'd,

Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care !

But ask thou not if Happiness be there,  
 If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,  
 Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;  
 Lift not the festal mask!—enough to know,  
 No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

And, this being so, I cannot but regard it as a very happy stroke of instinctive art, that the poet has here introduced Unferth, and has given us a quarrelsome scene where a really happy one would have been improbable. The scene is moreover well calculated to call up antecedent events and to bring out the strong utterance of Beowulf's vow.

499 ff. The character of Unferth is curiously like that of Drances in *Aeneid*, xi. 336 ff.; and the answer of Turnus in 378 ff. is curiously like Beowulf's answer to Unferth.

Compare also Tasso, tr. Fairfax, vi. 12:—

The Saracine at this was inly spited,  
 Who Soliman's great worth had long envied;  
 To hear him praised thus he nought delighted,  
 Nor that the king upon his aid relied.

Compare the taunt of Eliab to David in 1 Sam. xvii. 28.

500. *he who sate at the feet*: þe æt fótum sæt.

About sitting at the king's feet, an illustration offers in the Romance of Sir Tristrem. When Tristrem criticized the minstrel's performance before king Mark, he was invited to do better, and when he had played:—

The harpour gan to say  
 'The ma'stri give y the  
 Full sket:'  
 Bifor the kinges kne  
 Tristrem is ca'd to set.

Fytte i. 51.

See W. Scott, *The Betrothed*, c. 2; and the note there. Unferth was not exactly a minstrel, but a superior in the same general line; orator, historiologer, *raconteur*.

505. *should achieve*: gehédde.

This word belongs not to *gehédan* (as Heyne) but to *gehégan*. Sievers, *Beitr.* ix. 293.

542. *fleet*: fléotan.—For this verb, see Skeat, v. Fleet (4); and to his references, add Spenser, *Faery Queene*, II. xii. 14, IV. ix. 33; *Colin*, 286.

568. *about the swelling highway*: ymb brontne ford.

This is the only occurrence in B. of *ford*, a word whose familiar sound may mislead us. In Saxon times no doubt *ford* meant *vadum*, the passage of shallow water, just as it does now. But in this place we



want a larger sense, and one of which the present familiar sense might be a specialization. Skeat says the word is 'extended from A. S. *faran*, go;' but Weigand, v. Furt, makes it cognate with Greek *πόρος*, passage, and so related to *faran* but not derived from it. This I prefer; and would like to know more than I do about the Welsh *ffordd*, way, road. Professor Rhys tells me that this word is not in Irish, and that he has been wont to regard it as the English word borrowed.

570 b-581 a. Some traits of likeness to *Odyssey*, v. 301-405; the landing of Ulysses upon the Phæacian shore.

581 b. *I never heard say aught by thee*: Nó ic wiht fram þé.

I hope this use of *by*=concerning, is not too antiquated to be admissible in a translation from romance. It still flourishes in Westmoreland and the N. Riding of Yorkshire, where they say: 'I know nout, good or bad, by him.' *English Philology*, § 522.

586. —*of that I brag not much*—: (nó ic þæs [fela] gylpe).

This is Grein's emendation. Heyne has here assumed the loss of a line, and has imported the assumption into his text so far as to reckon the lost line numerically; the consequence of which is, that from this point his line-figures differ by one from those of every other edition, and I have not gone with him.

598. *black mail*: nýd báde.—See *Land Charters*, Glossarial Index, v. *néd bád toll*, *néd bádere tolltaker*.

599. *but maketh a sport of war*: ac he lust wígeð.

Kemble corrected it to 'ac he on lust wígeð,' but he wars right merrily, to his heart's content. Grein, keeping to the MS., regarded *wígeð* as of the verb *wegan*, carry, bear; and obtained the poor sense 'he bears, has, joy (trägt, hat Lust, Freude); M. Heyne regarded *lust-wígeð* as a compound, 'fights with pleasure (kämpft mit Lust);' but this in his fourth edition he gave up and returned to Kemble's emendation '[on] lust.' Bugge proposed in *Tidskrift*, viii. 48, an emendation which is very captivating and which I have hardly refrained from adopting; *he on lust pígeð*, i. e. he helps himself at will.

600. *slaughtereth and feasteth*: swefeð ond sendeð.

It was Heinrich Leo who detected the sense of the rare and obscure verb *sendan*; which is a causative from *sand* (*f.*), dish, ferculum. Haupt's *Zeitschrift*, ix. 444. For an example of this substantive see Ælfric, *Hom.*, ii. 168 t. Ða genemnode se halga wer þæt cawfæste wíf þe hí gelaðode, and ða sanda tealde ðe heo him gebær. *The holy man then named the pious woman who had invited them, and he enumerated the dishes that she had set before them.*

The word crops up now and then in the English of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In a Homily printed in Dr. Morris's *Old English Homilies* (from MS. Cott. Vespasian A. 22), p. 230, a feast of seven courses is 'vii. sanden.'

In the poem of *Genesis and Exodus* (E. E. T. S.), line 2295, Benjamin's mess is thus described :—

Of euerile sonde, of euerile win,  
most and best he gaf Beniamin.

When Sir Beues all alone had slain the giant and passed into his castle, he met the dame of the castle and commanded her to lead him into Hall and set meat before him, but he made her eat of every dish before he tasted it :—

þe leuedi, sore adrad wiþ alle,  
Ladde Beues in to þe halle,  
And of eueriche sonde,  
þat him com to honde,  
A dede hire ete alþer ferst, &c.

E. E. T. S. Extra Series, xlvi; line 1925.

612. *the words (of song) were jovial*: word wæron wynsume.

This might be taken to mean that the conversation was merry, and so Mr. Arnold :—‘the talk was joyous.’ But the connection of thought seems rather to be laughter, music, song. And curiously enough there is a Gloss of the tenth century, ‘*Cantabiles* wynsume.’ And such I take to be the intention of Heyne’s translation :—

Der Helden Lachen scholl, es tönten Klang  
und Worte voller Jubel.

612 b. *Wealhtheow*.

We cannot suppose this name of a queen to be composed of two words for a slave, or of two words meaning ‘foreign slave;’ and all the less, as the two words stand there in unblended distinctness. This distinctness is very like that which attends upon cases of Folks-Etymology; and I imagine that we have here some famous name which had become worn and corrupt, and had undergone the process of ignorant restoration. I cannot help thinking of the name of Veleda in *Germania*, 8; the more as the manifest authority of Wealhtheow answers admirably to the description of venerated womanhood in that place of Tacitus. I am not supposing that our poet went to the *Germania* to fetch a name from thence, but rather that the name Veleda had a traditional significance answering to the character depicted in that chapter. Perhaps connected with Icel. *völva*, sibyl, prophetess, wise woman—which see in Vigfusson.

613. *Hrothgar’s queen, mindful of ceremonies*: cwén Hróðgáres cynna gemyndig.—i. e. mindful of tradition, of custom and etiquette. This etiquette is described in the Gnostic verses in the Exeter Book; Thorpe’s edition, p. 339: Grein, ll. 88–93.



So in the Nibelungen the queen of Sigismund is mindful of old custom :—

Sigelind the wealthy did as they did of yore.

*Nib. Lid.* § 42, tr. Lettsom.

In this whole passage (612–641) the course of the action is not dependent on the mood of the moment and the choice of the actors, not even of the queen, who here figures as the ruler of social proprieties. The conduct and movement is not arbitrary or fortuitous, but traditional and ceremonial. Of this we are apprized when the attitude of the queen is given as *cynna gemyndig*—mindful of ceremonies.

It is to be observed that the royal lady offers the cup to Beowulf, not in his turn where he sate among the rest, but after it has gone the round ; her approach to Beowulf is an act apart. And I think it probable that he took up for the occasion a prescribed and ritual station, and did not await the queen in his humble seat among the juniors. He probably came out and stood on the open floor of the hall. Compare 1025, where his reception of the cup is rapidly noticed in a ceremony that looks like a counterpart to this. In receiving the cup he utters his vow in a new and solemn form, and here it might be understood that the personal honour conferred on him by the queen had wound him up to the romantic pitch, and this might seem an adequate interpretation of the passage. And so it did to me, until I read the note on ‘Bragi’s Bumper,’ in *The Saga Library*, by William Morris and Erikr Magnússon, 1891, vol. i. p. 190 ff. There the reader may find a description (with instances) ‘of the ceremony observed when vows were taken in style, as it were.’

619. *hall-cup*: sele ful.

The cup which went the round of the company and was tasted by all. So in Oriel, on the College anniversaries, we drink all round out of one cup, which on the greater occasions is the cup known as the founder’s cup, curious goldsmith’s work of early medieval date. That is our *sele ful*. The same is the traditionary custom in some other Colleges, both of Oxford and of Cambridge, possibly in all.

621. The young men sate together and apart from the elders, as we see in 1188, where Beowulf’s seat is among the youngsters. See note on 1190 a.

623. *diademed*: béag hroden.—The *beag* was the circlet of gold on the head, as more descriptively said in 1163.

630 and then he descanted: ond þá gyddode.

This verb has not here the general meaning of *locutus est* spake (Grein, v. giddian), nor the special sense which Heyne (ed. 5) would assign it of speaking in apophthegm or in alliterative verse (einen Spruch sprechen, in allitterierender Rede sprechen); indeed, this latter, by importing the idea of conventionality, misses the spirit of the passage.



It has indeed common ground with *gid*, poesy, only not through the formal part of the poetry, but through its fire, passion, and frenzy—and to this agrees not only the contents of the hero's speech, but also the subsequent designation of it as *gilp cwide*, 640. So in Cædmon the brag of Nebuchadnezzar, 'Is not this great Babylon,' &c., is introduced by the poet thus:—*Ongan gyddigan þurh gylp micel*. (Daniel 559.) Of this signification we have relics in the modern adjective *giddy*.

634. *once for all*: *ánunga*.

The earlier editors understood this word to mean 'single-handed,' and to be a repetition of the *ána* in 425. Thus Ettmüller (1840) *dass ich einzig eurer Leute Willen thaete*; and Thorpe (1855), 'That I alone your people's will would work.' But since 1860, when the two fragments of 'Waldere' were discovered at Copenhagen, the present interpretation has been generally adopted, after a passage in one of the fragments, where *ánunga* is clearly used in this sense.

643. *the lofty word outspoken*: *þryðword sprecen*.

They had long been cowed; but now the sight and hearing of Beowulf had revived their former courage.

His words are spurs to virtue; every knight  
That seem'd before to tremble and to quake,  
Now talked bold, ensample hath such might;  
Each one the battle fierce would undertake.

Fairfax, *Tasso*, vii. 66.

644 *b*. *until that suddenly*: *oð þæt semninga*.

With sunset the panic returned, and interrupted their festivity. This motive is expanded, down to 'he warred in darkness,' 651 *a*. The text of this passage is somehow out of order, but there is no obscurity of the general sense. Grein invented two new lines to follow 647, which he labelled 647 *a* and 647 *b*, containing what is bracketed in the following paraphrase:—'he knew that against the high Hall war was determined by the monster; [for they could dwell in the hall only by day] from the time they could see the sun's light, until shrouding night came over all with dusky clouds, and the creatures of darkness came marching abroad.' Here *oððe* was resolved into two words *oð þe* = *oð þæt* = until. Ettmüller put *ne* before *meahton*, and this has made a sense possible, without stronger expedients. The *oððe* is rather awkward, and Bugge in *Tidskrift* viii. 57, says it is equivalent to 'and,' comparing 2475. This seems a little strained, and I do not find 'or' quite inapplicable here. There is something of alternative between twilight and the dead of night.

651. *he warred in obscurity*: *wan under wolcnum*.

Below, 703, the warlock is *sceadu genga* ranger of the dark. In the *Leechdoms*, ii. 344, there is a prescription for a salve *wip ælfscynne and niht gengan* against elf-folk and night-gangers.



658. *Have now and hold*: hafa nú ond geheald.

A solemn formula of high antiquity, which still holds chief place in the effective part of all our conveyances, especially in that conveyance of most general interest:—‘to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse,’ &c. It occurs again 2430.

680. *although I very well may*: þeah ic eal mæge.

Thorpe did not understand this adverbial *eal*, and he substituted *cáðe*. But as Bugge observes, this *þeah eal* is the precursor of our modern *although*. He quotes from Peter Langtoft’s Chronicle:—*þof alle Edgar þe gate, to þe reame hast þou no right*: Although Edgar begat thee, to the realm hast thou no right.

This courtesy or concession, or whatever it is to be called, seems too much even for a mythic hero; it outruns all the Quixotism of romance. But Dr. Rönning observes that it is a genuine touch of the northern warrior’s spirit, which made the hero disdain to take advantage of his enemy, even where the enemy was a goblin. *Beowulf’s Kvadet*, p. 109. A much more surprising thing it is to find an analogous concession in the historical ballad of the Battle of Maldon, made at the demand of an invading enemy. Something of the same heroic sentiment even influenced the conduct of James IV in the Battle of Flodden. Read Aytoun’s Preface to his Lay, ‘Edinburgh after Flodden,’ in his *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*.

681. *of those gentle practices*: þara góða.

i. e. the more refined arts of battle, which in later times were spoken of as knightly accomplishments;—above all, sword exercise. As a late illustration of the romantic halo which surrounded the tradition of this culture, see Fairfax’s *Tasso*, vi. 42:—

Close at his surest ward each warrior lieth;  
He wisely guides his hand, his foot, his eye;  
This blow he proveth, that defence he trieth;  
He traverseth, retireth, preaseth nigh;  
Now strikes he out, and now he falsifieth;  
This blow he wardeth, that he lets slip by;  
And for advantage he lets some part  
Discover’d seem; thus art deludeth art.

Here, the foe is a ruffian, that knows only the rudest kind of encounter, but even so the hero will accommodate him, and take no advantage of his own superior education.

In a different degree but in the same spirit Raymond Berenger in *The Betrothed*, c. 3, says to the Fleming: ‘Wilkin Flammock, I speak not to thee the language of chivalry, of which thou knowest nothing.’

685 ff. *and thereafter may the Allwise God, &c.*: and siððan witig God &c.

This Christian appeal superseded the heathen formula which we have seen above, 455; and it continued in use through the whole length of romantic poetry. Thus Scott in *The Lord of the Isles*, iii. 6:—

Thus, then, my noble foe I greet;  
Health and high fortune till we meet,  
And then—what pleases Heaven!

697. *webs of war-speed*: wig spéda gewiofu.

Weavings of successes in war. Here Destiny is a web of cloth. In Greek mythology the destiny of mortals was imaged in the figure of spinning a thread; and the chief of the Fates, perhaps the original Fate from which the other two were developed, was called Clotho, that is, Spinster. Compare *Odyssey*, iv. 208:—

ὄλβον ἐπικλώσῃ γαμέοντί τε γεινομένῳ τε.

700. *For a truth it is shewn, &c.*—i. e. though they were heathens, yet were they under the care of Divine Providence, just as we Christians are.

703. See note on 651.

711. The mist on the hill-side harmonizes with the movement of the marauder, as also in *Iliad*, iii. 11, it is said that the mist on the hills is bad for the shepherds but better for the thief of the night.

716. *metal-spangled*: fættum fáhne.

In what way gold plates or gold-leaf would be employed for the decoration of a hall, see Ælfric, *Hom.* ii. 498; 'he beworhte þa bigelsas mid gyldenum læfrum' = he over-laid the arches with leaves of gold. (Dietrich in Haupt xi. p. 419.) This was a Roman fashion, which grew up when the spoils of the world flowed in. Pliny says that the gilded ceilings which in his day were usual even in private houses, had never been known in Rome until after the fall of Carthage, and then for the first time this decoration was employed in the Capitol. From that beginning the fashion spread to private rooms and to walls as well as ceilings, which now (says he) are gilded like any plated vessels. Whereas in the time of Catulus people hardly knew what to think of it, when the brazen roof-tiles of the Capitol were by him gilded for the first time. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 3(18) § 57. This custom affords the explanation (first given by Professor Skeat) of the word *Oriel*, which is Low Latin *oriolum* (aureolum), a gilded chamber.

726. *out of his eyes there stood*: him of éagum stód.

Compare 2313, 2769 b, and Sax. Chron. 892 A, in the description of the comet þær stent lang leoma of.

736 b. *Mighty rage*: þrýð swyð.

If this is taken as an adjective the sense will be 'Masterly strong the kinsman of Hygelac was considering,' &c. But see note on 131.



The conduct of Beowulf at this moment may be described in words taken from that old Neapolitan story book, *Il Pentamerone del Cavalier Giovan Battista Basile*, Giornata i, Trattenemiento 2, where the Prince hears some one in the night drawing stealthily towards his bed:—‘ma comm’ ommo aresecato, che no le metteva paura manco lo brutto Zefierno, fece la gatta morta, aspettanno l’effetto de sto negozio:’—in the translation of J. E. Taylor thus:—‘But as he was a bold fellow whom even the ugly devil himself could not frighten, he acted the dead cat, waiting to see the upshot of the affair.’

738. *in the course of his ravengings*: under fær gripum.

It is not to be supposed that Beowulf meant to let his men be experimented upon, and so to give Grendel free scope in order that he might see a specimen of his carnage before he arrested his movements;—and yet *that* is what we must imagine if *under fær gripum* is to mean ‘in the midst of his ravengings.’ This difficulty may perhaps be relieved by giving full play to *gefaran wolde* intended to proceed; as if Beowulf would only gather from his inceptive movements what course of butchery it was that the warlock gloated over in expectation.

But this is intricate and elaborate, and so far it is the less satisfactory. I cannot help leaning towards the emendation of Grundtvig (1820) *fær gryrum*, which he still adhered to in his edition of 1861, p. 125. This would mean something like ‘amidst the sudden alarm,’ and it would support the sense of *þrýð swýð behéold*, which points to a huge effort of self-control and concentration.

753. *with bigger hand-grip*: mund gripe máran.

It would appear more logical to say ‘with a hand-grip so mighty;’—but this would obliterate a feature of the original. For another example of this double comparative, compare 1011. In De Quincey’s ‘impassioned prose,’ as he himself characterised it, may be noticed analogous constructions where he bursts through the prosaic into a supra-logical and heroical elevation.—‘Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent County of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.’ *The English Mail Coach*, Part ii. But a more exact parallel may be quoted from the sober columns of recent journalism. In an appreciative article on ‘Cardinal Newman’ in *The Spectator*, August 16, 1890, this occurs:—‘Never surely was there an intellect which combined a happier and more delicate insight into the concrete side of life, with a larger and more daring grasp of its abstract truths.’

758. *the brave*: se góda.

Rieger suggests *se módega* the courageous, for alliteration sake. The sense is not affected, for *se góda* means the same.

761. *The monster was making off*: eoten wæs út weard.

‘Der Riese wich, der Ritter nach!’ Hans v. Wolzogen. Compare



*Andreas*, 1537, *was him út myne* and the whole passage there. For the use of *furður* to signify following up as the opposite of yielding or giving ground to an enemy, see the speech of Leofsunu in *The Battle of Maldon*, 247, *ac wille furðor gán*.

769. *mortal panic*: *ealu scerwen*.

Such seems to be the effect of this phrase, which literally means 'ale-spilling.' A similiar expression in *Andreas*, 1528, which occurs also in a moment of horror, throws light on this. Language was strained to depict the intensity of a deadly struggle, especially when it was the pivot of a tale. In the single combat of Tancred with Argantis we see what this epic encounter had ripened into by Tasso's time; *Jerusalem Delivered*, vi. (tr. Fairfax):—

## XL.

These sons of Mavors bore, instead of spears,  
Two knotty masts, which none but they could lift;  
Each foaming steed so fast his master bears,  
That never beast, bird, shaft, flew half so swift:  
Such was their fury, as when Boreas tears  
The shatter'd crags from Taurus northern clift:  
Upon their helms their lances long they broke,  
And up to heav'n flew splinters, sparks, and smoke.

## XLI.

The shock made all the towers and turrets quake,  
And woods and mountains all nigh-hand resound;  
Yet could not all that force and fury shake  
The valiant champions, nor their persons wound:  
Together hurtled both their steeds, and brake  
Each other's neck; the riders lay on ground:  
But they (great masters of war's dreadful art)  
Pluck'd forth their swords, and soon from earth upstart.

781. *leastwise fire's embrace*: *nymðe líges fæðm*.

Compare 82. Whatever may be the right view of that passage, it almost seems in this place that the thought is of destruction by fire as the natural end, sooner or later, of a timbern edifice. Somewhat in the same sense Oliver Wendell Holmes writes about libraries of timber:—  
'It is only a question of time, just as with the burning of College libraries. They all burn up sooner or later, provided they are not housed in brick or stone or iron.' *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, iii.

785 a. *even out on the wall*: *of wealle*.



Compare 194 *a*. Colonel Lumsden has kept up the phrase:—

Uprose the cry again renewed ; and at the sound did fall  
An eerie dread on every Dane who listened from the wall.

793. *useful to any one of the Leods*: léoda ænigum nytte tealde.

Compare 841 and note there. The latest form of this grim jocularity appears in the Comic Opera:—

I've got a little list,  
I've got a little list,  
Of society offenders,  
Who might well be under ground,  
And who never would be missed,  
Who never would be missed!

W. S. Gilbert, *The Mikado*, 1885.

Heyne has smoothed it out into a soberer sense:—

dess Leben jedem er für schädlich hielt.

806. *in the day of this life*: on þæm dæge þysses lifes.

I suspect this line of being a vagrant. It has occurred twice before, 197 and 790, and in both instances it is manifestly in place. But it is hard to understand its significance here.

816. *the foul warlock*: atol æglæca.

'Aeneas was no *warluck*, as the Scots commonly call such men, who they say are iron-free or lead-free.' Dryden, tr. Virgil, Dedication; quoted in Skeat, v. Warlock.

The same exemption characterised the being which the Northern-folk called a troll; thus Dr. Vigfusson, v. Troll, quotes Ísl. ii. 364: 'troll, er þik bíta eigi járn;' *troll, whom no steel can wound!*

841 f. *His life-ending was no grief whatever to any, &c.*: Nó his lífgedál, &c.

A form of irony proper to epical romance. See above, 793, and note there. In the Nibelungen (198) the exultation of Siegfried's people at the capture of king Ludgast is thus expressed:—

. . . . .when they came to hear

The prisoner was king Ludgast, they scarcely shed a tear.

856. *barons on steeds*: beornas on blancum.

Whether *blanca* at this date retained any sense of colour, is hard to say; but it became a mere poetical variety of expression for horse. So in Layamon 23900 'and leap on his blanke'=and leapt on his horse. In a fragment of one of the huge 15th century romances in Northumbrian dialect, edited by Prof. Skeat with the title of *The Wars of Alexander* (E. E. T. S. xlvii), this word occurs several times, and it is used of Bucephalus, line 767:

And þa ð Bocifilas his blonke . he bremely ascendis.

865. In the Romance of Bevis of Hampton, we find horseracing among the festivities of Whitsuntide :—

In somer at Whitsontyde  
Whan knights most on horsebacke ride,  
A cours let them make on a daye,  
Steedes and palfreys for to assaye,  
Which horse that best may ren.

868. *bombastic groom* : guma gilp hlæden.

The compound is unique; found nowhere else. Thorpe renders 'vaunt-laden person.' The man is not Unferth, but the chief minstrel. Here we seem to catch sight of our poet's disaffection towards the current minstrelsy and poesy, which still continued (as we may surmise) to glory in *prestige* when it had lost its genuine freshness.

I have supposed that the epithet regarded the magniloquence incidental to his office, his grand style; but it may very well mean that he was a braggart. In early times the minstrel was made much of, and was apt to be inflated. One of this craft had the presumption to boast that he would beat the very Muses at singing if they would compete with him. *Iliad*, ii. 597.

870 f. *word followed word by the bond of truth* : word óðer fand sóðe gebunden.

Literally : *word found another*, found its fellow. Whether the truthfulness of the link touches the sense or the sound, whether it was the justice of thought or the harmony of rhythm and alliteration, is perhaps an over-minute enquiry. But Rieger's impression is too important to be overlooked. He understands that the minstrel did not merely narrate, but improvised in alliterative verse, of which he thinks this parenthesis contains an interesting technical description. The charm of good alliterative verse lies in this, that the chime harmonizes with the reason in some mysterious way, and so the thought of the text might be regarded as true both ways, the two aspects being indissoluble. There is a fine parallel in the Rune-song at the end of Hávamál, in which the affinity of word for word is coupled with that of deed for deed. 'Word me led from word to word, work me led from work to work.' It is a bit of primitive philosophy; and in its very form it serves to exemplify the aptness of word-chime to wait upon earnest thought :—

orð mér af orði  
orðs leitaði,  
verk mér af verki  
verks leitaði

Ord förte fra Ord  
til andre Ord  
Dåd förte fra Dåd  
til andre Dåd.

*Danish tr. H. G. Möller.*



Simrock has rendered it thus:—

Wort aus dem Wort verlieh mir das Wort,  
Werk aus dem Werk verlieh mir das Werk.

871 *b. began anon to rehearse*: secg[an] eft ongan.

Rieger's emendation, approved by Bugge.

872. It is a circumstance of peculiar interest in the *Beowulf*, that it should thus picture its own rise and origin. There is something analogous to this in the Homeric poems. Of the Bard of the Heroic Age Mr. Gladstone says:—'It was his duty to descant upon the freshest and most interesting subjects: and the events at Troy were reckoned to have pre-eminent attractions, even at the distant court of Alkinoos, before Odusseus had reached his island home.' *Homer* (Literature Primers), p. 9

886 *inasmuch as*. syððan.

The transition of *syððan* in this place from its usual function of time to that of consequence has been noticed by E. Nader, 'Syntax des *Beowulf*' in *Anglia*, xi. 3, p. 447. The German language afforded Grein (1857) a happy equivalent and parallel expression in *dieweil*:

*dieweil der Wehrhafte den Wurm ertödtet.*

But Grundtvig suspected that this same *syððan* covers the place where erst stood *Sigeferð*, the same as the northern Sigurd, the traditional dragon-slayer. Rönning heartily agrees with Grundtvig. *Beovulfs Kvadet*, p. 75.

897. *The Worm dissolved with heat*: *wurm háte gemealt*.

Here I have adopted the emendation of Scherer, *háte* instead of *hát*. This *háte* will be the instrumental case of the substantive *hát*, heat, which occurs 2605.

900. *such eminence he won*: *he þæs áron þáh*.

A fine emendation by Cosijn, which relieves us from the embarrassing (*he þæs éar onþáh*). Here *áron* is dative plural for *árum* with honours; —'he to that extent flourished with honours.'

909. Here we may recognize a parallel passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a play written as a burlesque of the romances of chivalry. It is in Act i. Scene i:

'*Ralph*. And certainly those knights are much to be commended who, neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf, through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.'

918. *launched and advanced*: *scofen ond scynded*.

More articulately though perhaps not more poetically said by Dante, *Purg.* ii. 55:—

Da tutte parti saettava il giorno  
Lo sol, &c.

Where Mr. Shadwell thus, in an unpublished translation which I am permitted to quote:—

On every side the day was driven  
Forth by the Sun, who from mid heaven  
Had with his arrows bright  
Put Capricorn to flight.

924 a. *The path to the mead-hall*: medo stīg.

Thorpe's translation 'meadow-path' is wide of the mark, and it introduces scenery quite foreign to the situation. We are in the court or space enclosed by the buildings of the royal burgh.

The hall was called *medo ærn* 69, *medo heal* 484, 638, *medu seld* 3065, all meaning mead-hall. When a compound enters into a fresh combination, the second part of it may be dropped, so that the first part imports the whole of the old compound into the new. Sometimes the long and the shortened forms are both found. Thus in Sax. Chron. 988, where C has *arcestol*, E has *arce-biscop-stol*, see of archbishop. A variation of the same economy may perhaps be recognised in the name Heaðo-Beardas. See *Glossary of Proper Names*. The same principle is operative in the composition of *morganatic* (Skeat). See on 3102 b. In 1643 the courts or gardens about the mead-hall are *meodo wongas*, mead-fields, mead-plains, mead-courts.

924 b. *with a bevy of ladies*: mægða hóse.

Compare *Romans of Partenay* (E. E. T. S.), line 1828:—

Ther acompanied was she noght ill,  
Of laidies had ful gret company,  
With noble damyselles longing hir until,  
Als of the maried as of maidens many.

This *hóse* is Instr. case of *hós* a company, MG. *hansa* which represents *σπεῖρα* (cohors), Mk. xv. 16, John xviii. 3, 12; *πληθος*, Lk. vi. 17. This is the word from which the mercantile association of the 'Hanseatic' towns took their designation. The word *hós* was also used for a cluster of grapes, as appears from the Vocab. 'Butrus *hós*.' A weak form *hósa* is also found, wherein the idea of 'group' seems translated into the sense of *case*, *capsule*, *pod*: '*Siliqua pisanhosa*;' Parker Gl. of 8th Century. The phrase is something like Spenser's 'A bevie of fayre damzels,' *F. Q.* iv. 10. 48. It is a rare and a grandly poetic word, this *hóse*, almost worthy to be rendered by Milton's 'pomp,' as in *P. L.* viii. 61:—

With goddess-like demeanour forth she went;  
Not unattended, for on her as Queen,  
A pomp of winning Graces waited still.



926. *he stood on the Staple*: stód on stapole.

Bugge cannot tolerate the rendering 'an der mittelsäule' (Heyne), which must have been *at stapole*. He reverts to Rask's emendation *on stadole*.

I think the Stapol was a tribunal or suggestum outside the hall in open air, perhaps on the terrace which was the margin of the embankment on which the hall was built. See *Land Charters*, p. 466 ff. Editors have been misled by the notion that this scene takes place *within* the Hall, because the king looks at the 'gilded roof.' As if the gilding *must* be internal! For the practice of gilding the roof-tiles, see Pliny as quoted above in the note on line 716.

On such a Staple of patriarchal jurisdiction did old Nestor take his seat, when, to honour the visit of Telemachus, he would hold a sacrifice to Athēnē, and preside over a festive meal. This Staple was of polished marble, and it stood in front of the high doors of the Hall. On that seat had been wont to sit his father Neleus, who for wise judgment was likened to the gods. There sate Nestor now, holding his sceptre; while his family flocked around, and received his commands. The passage is in *Odyssey*, iii. 404 ff., and it begins thus in the marvellous hexameters of Voss:—

Als die dämmernde Eos mit Rosenfingern emporstieg,  
Sprang aus dem Lager sofort der gerenische reisige Nestor;  
Trat dann hervor, und setzt' auf gehauene Steine sich nieder,  
Welche draussen ihm waren am ragenden Flügelthore,  
Weiss und hell, wie schimmernd von Oel; auf welchen vor Alters  
Neleus pflog zu sitzen, an Rath Unsterblichen ähnlich.  
Nun sass Nestor darauf, der gerenische Hort der Achaier,  
Haltend den Stab; und die Söhn' umdrängeten ihn in Versamm-  
lung, &c.

The Staple seems to be the same as 'la place devant le perron,' which Léon Gautier indicates as the traditional place for the ceremony of dubbing a knight. *La Chevalerie*, p. 256.

I will add something that seems analogous. There is or was in familiar use in America the word *stoop*, to signify the flight of steps up to a house. It is a Dutch noun *stoep* (verb *stoepen*, to sit down) meaning a bench placed, according to old Dutch custom, in front of the house; it took root in New York when it was New Amsterdam, and thence spread over the States and became generally received. After a while it came to designate the flight of steps on the top of which the bench was placed, and this signification remained after the bench itself had been swept away by the changes of modern fashion. (*The English Language in America*, by C. A. Bristed: in 'Cambridge Essays,' 1855, p. 68.) Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, has, 'I walk up my stoop.'



939. *demons*: *scuccum*.

See Forby, *Vocabulary of East Anglia*, v. Old-Shock; and my *Land Charters*, p. 476.

958. *We discharged that high task, &c.*: *We þæt ellen weorc, &c.*

Heyne says that this 'we' is a *pluralis majestatis*, i. e. that Beowulf uses the plural as the birth-right of a prince. But this seems questionable. Though related to a ruling family, he has attained no dignity: modesty is the mark of his character; below, 1190, he sits with the juniors in hall, and there is no mention of promotion as yet. I apprehend that he says 'we' in the courtesy of a captain, sharing with his men the credit of his achievement. So in 431 when he begs to have the task to himself, he still, somewhat incongruously, brings in the company of his *eorlas*. In a like spirit, 2876, Wiglaf asserts that Beowulf has slain the dragon singlehanded, suppressing or minimising his own part.

960. *the terror of the unknown*: *eafod uncúðes*.

The last word is not to be generalized into *hateful* or *monster* or *fiend* (as Heyne does); for the very point of the speech is lost thereby. Grendel was the name of a visitant that had never been seen; his very shape was unknown, except by vague report; he was known only by the traces of his visits. Therefore says Beowulf, 'I wish I could have nailed him, that you might have had a sight of him.' And compare line 966.

962. *the fiend in full gear*: *féond on frætewum*.

Grundtvig proposed *feterum* (the fiend in fetters), which Müllenhoff approved, pointing to *heardan clammum* in the next line as an apposition, and implying that this phrase must needs mean iron clamps. But it is used elsewhere for a strong grip of hand, and the context seems to indicate this meaning here.

Bugge does not like *frætewum*, and he has proposed *þone frætgan*, which he takes from *Juliana*, 284, where it is used of the devil. Only it should be observed that the evil one appears there like an angel of light, and *þone frætgan* may there mean the bedizened, the false-seeming—a sense not applicable here.

965. *for my hand-grip*: *for mund gripe mínum*.

Here the MS. has *hand gripe*, and Kemble's correction *mund* is put beyond doubt by the rules of the alliteration. Concerning this word *mund* hand, see 3091 note.

967. *unless his body vanished*: *buton his líc swice*.

The thought seems to be that perhaps the fiend might be possessed of a preterhuman faculty of vanishing.

981. *A silenter man was then, &c.*: *þá wæs swígra secg, &c.*

About this *swígra* there has been some vacillation; to justify its grammatical character as a comparative, it has of late years had a positive



*swígor* made for its special accommodation ; particularly by Heyne. Sievers (*Zacher*, xxi. 3) denies the existence of such an adjective, and asserts that Grein was right in taking *swígra* as a comparative to the well-evidenced adjective *swíge* silent.

984 *b. every one straight before him*: foran æghwylc.

'A slight correction of the text is necessary here. Sievers (*Beiträge*, x. 232) considers the second half-verse as metrically deficient. Read therefore *foran æghwylcne*, and both sense and metre are improved. *Æghwylcne* is in apposition to *fingras*. "They saw the fingers each to the front." Thomas Miller (Göttingen) in *Anglia*, xii. 3.

987. *horrible spikes*: egl unhioru.

Compare German ungeheuer. Among the equivalents of *unhiore* (*unhiore*, *unhiere*) in the Vocabularies, are atrox, nocens, funesta, scelerata, criminosa, credelis, perniciosus, cruentus, torva, infestus. The word occurs again 2121 *wíf unhyre*, awful merewife; 2414 *weara unhiore*, portentous keeper.

995. *brocaded tapestries along the walls*: web æfter wágum.

Literally 'the webs,' but this would fail to convey the idea of gold-bossed tapestry, with pictured histories, and the figures raised in relief with threads of gold. In the Berkshire Domesday we read of a maiden lady who had two hides of her own freehold land, and held another half hide from Godric the Sheriff as her recompense for teaching his daughter the art of embroidery in gold (ut illa doceret filiam ejus auri-frisium operari). Freeman, N. C. iv. 36. For the antiquity of the art and its developments, see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 74.

In a volume of Wills edited for the E. E. T. S. by Dr. Furnivall, such hall-hangings are designated in two places by the name of 'hallyng.' In one of the Wills (A. D. 1454) the history embroidered is the Nine Worthies. 'Also y bequeth to my brother John Sturgeon the hallyng with the ix wurthy.' *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate*, London. p. 133.

1008 *a. shall sleep after supper*: swefeð æfter symle.

Milton's piece upon the University Carrier offers some strange affinities of thought with this abrupt little episode, about shifts and dodges to elude Death, especially in these closing lines:—

In the kind Office of a Chamberlin  
Shew'd him his room where he must lodge that night,  
Pull'd off his Boots, and took away the light.  
If any ask for him, it shall be said,  
*Hobson* has supt, and's newly gone to bed.

1009. *the time and the moment*: sél ond mæl.

This coupled phrase occurs again below, 1611. It still survives in the speech of East Anglia, where a mother will say to a boy at his start

in the world—‘Now mind your seals and meals!’ meaning not barely this—‘mind times and occasions, do everything at the proper time,’ but as a broad and general counsel of discretion, to have his wits about him and be careful of his conduct.

1011 f. *in stronger force . . . more bravely muster*: máran weorode . . . sél gebáran.

Accumulated comparative; an epic construction. Compare 753.

1013. *They went to bench in merry guise*: Bugon þá to bence bláð ágende.

Compare *Amis and Amiloun*, 1899:—

In kinges court, as it is lawe,  
Trumpes in halle to mete gan blawe.  
To benche went tho bold.

1015. *their kinsmen*: mágas þára.

The difficulty of finding an antecedent for *þára* led Prof. S. Bugge (*Paul und Braune*, 1886) to propose that 1014–5, (*fylle . . . þara*) should be put in parentheses:—and this I have followed.

Heyne’s remedy was to suppose the omission of a line or two in which the sons of Hrothgar (1189) were mentioned or alluded to, and thus *þara* was furnished with its antecedent. The effect of this would be somewhat as follows:—‘They went to bench in merry spirits, . . . . enjoyed the copious feast. With fair courtesy did their high relatives quaff many a mead-bowl, men of resolute mind in the lofty hall, Hrothgar and Hrothulf.’ But in his ed. 5 by Dr. Socin, he has adopted Bugge’s suggestion.

1023. *the grand treasure-sword*: mære máððum sweord.

A sword famous among royal insignia, which was fetched for the occasion, as we should say, out of ‘The Tower.’ This is, to speak in the mature terms of chivalry, the knighting of Beowulf. The incident of knighting was that the new knight should be well horsed and harnessed. And that was Beowulf’s honour now. See Malory’s *Morte Darthur*, Book x. c. 34. The precious ceremonial sword would be damascened with gold, and it was the attribute of a like sword that gave the epithet χρυσάρεος to god or hero in the Greek Epic. The sword was not conceived of as golden in bulk, but as inwrought with gold. So Spenser admirably in *Faery Queene*, Book v. Canto i:—

#### IX.

Which steely brand, to make him dreaded more,  
She gave unto him, gotten by her slight,  
And earnest search, where it was kept in store  
In Joves eternall house, unwist of wight,



Since he himselfe it us'd in that great fight  
 Against the Titans, that whylome rebelled  
 Gainst highest heaven: Chrysaor it was hight;  
 Chrysaor, that all other swords excelled,  
 Well proved in that same day when Jove those Gyants quelled:

## X.

For of most perfect metall it was made,  
 Tempred with Adamant amongst the same,  
 And garnisht all with gold upon the blade  
 In goodly wise, whereof it tooke his name,  
 And was of no lesse vertue then of fame;  
 For there no substance was so firme and hard,  
 But it would pierce or cleave, where so it came,  
 Ne any armour could his dint out-ward;  
 But wheresoever it did light, it throughly shard.

1036 *b.* *to bring into the court*: on flet téon.

Does this mean that the horses were brought into Hall, or, is the *flet* a wider area within which the Hall stands? The former idea is perhaps rather encouraged by 1086.

The exact significance of *coderas* is doubtful. Heyne regards it as the enclosure, the palings of the court. If this is right, then we might see a parallel in the following quotation from Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*:—'My lord's mule and our horses were ready brought into the inner court' (ed. Henry Morley, p. 225). The two other places in which the phrase occurs, Cædmon 2439 and 2481, are not decisive.

But people rode into Hall in the middle ages, or at least in the romances they did so. In Chaucer's *Squieres Tale* a knight rides into Hall after the third course, and up to the high table. In the *Lyfe of Ipomydon*, Fitte iii, line 1671:—

Into the hall come rydyng a may,  
 Oute of Calabre, sothe to say,  
 On a white mule, byfore the kynge;  
 A dwerffe with hyr come rydyng.

Weber, ii. 341.

And still, as I believe, at a Coronation banquet, the king's champion rides up to the high table in Westminster Hall, about the time of the second course, and challenges any who may dispute the right of the new monarch, and throws down a glove.

These horses had cheek-pieces with gold plates, and Hrothgar's saddle was enriched with silver, like the white mules in the *Chanson de Roland*, vii:—*Li frein sunt d'or, les seles d'argent mises*=the bridles

dressed with gold, the saddles with silver. The word *sinc* in all the other places of the poem is generic, signifying precious things, treasure; but this passage suggests 'silver' specifically, and this was probably the first material sense of the word.

1037. *on one of them stood the saddle gaily caparisoned: þára ánum stód sadol searwum fáh.*

This bald rendering is my best, for I cannot find a convenient modern equivalent to the A. S. use of the verb *standan* when applied to anything 'standing out' conspicuous and striking the eye. In the matter of light or fire it is repeatedly found, e. g. 726, 1570, 2313. The use of this verb here not merely exhibits the king's saddle as a brilliant object, but (what is more) gives the moral impression upon the Court as of a singular mark of distinction conferred upon Beowulf.

1041. *never failed in the front the charger of the famous (king). nǣfre on óre læg wídcúdes wícg.*

I have adopted Grundtvig's emendation *wícg* for *wíg*. Compare Tacitus, *Germania*, 7: 'et duces exemplo potius quam imperio, si prompti, si conspicii, si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt.'

1046 ff. *So manfully &c.* This challenge implies the presence of criticism on the bounties of kings and chieftains; and this is the germ of that scrupulous discrimination of propriety in gifts which we find in the later Romances. I quote the following after J. Flach, *Le Campagnonnage dans les Chansons de Geste*, in *Études Romanes*, dédiées à Gaston Paris, le 29 Decembre, 1890:—

Les dras de soie de paille Alexandrin,  
Les bons henas et les copes d'or fin,  
Les biax ostors, les faucons moutardin,  
Tel avoir done Karles li fix Pepin  
As gentis homes qui sunt de riche lin.  
Les palefroiz, les chevax, les deniers,  
Ce done Karle as pources chevaliers;  
Le vair, le gris et les corans destriers,  
Les sors faucons, les muez esperviers,  
Ce done Karle as bacheliers legiers,  
As damoisiaus, as vilains sodoiers.

*Ch. d'Aspremont, 71 ff.*

1056. *had not the providence of God, had not Wyrð, stood in his way: nēfne him wítig God Wyrð forstóde.*

Thorpe regarded *wyrð* as apposition to *wítig god*; but he did not preserve the personality of Wyrð—'had not the wise God, fate, prevented.' Heyne also renders 'fate,' but he follows Grein in taking it as acc. to *forstóde*, wherein the regiment of *him* seems to be overlooked.

The passage 1056-62 is not from the repertory of old minstrelsy; it



belongs to the reflection and the philosophical studies of the present poet. It cannot be said to rise naturally out of the occasion; on the contrary, it is rather calculated to afford a triumph to those critics who exult over the incongruities of our text. It has certainly the effect of a doctrinal passage rather forcibly inserted; and I would account for it in the following manner. The elder minstrelsy had made Wyrð (Fate) all-powerful, and we have enough of it left to reveal the deep root of this oppressive conviction. See line 455, and the quotations in Grein, v. Wyrð. In the ordinary treatment line 1056 would have closed the allusion to Grendel, with the reflection that he would have slain more men had not Fate opposed him:—somewhat thus, *nefre him wealdend Wyrð forstóde*. In place of *wealdend* (or other epithet in *w-*) the poet puts *wítig god* to correct the heathenism of it; and then gives a free rein to the thoughts which rose when Providence and Fate were brought into juxtaposition. Providence and Fate are not opposed but harmonised by the subordination of the latter; and divine Prescience is no check upon man's activity, but cooperative with it. In this view, and the rest of this train of associations, we can hardly err in recognising a mind fed upon the book of Boethius, *De Consolatione*, especially iv. 6, and onward.

This manner of unifying the divine and human action is kept by the later romances, as illustrated by Chaucer's burlesque of Sir Thopas:—

Sir Thopas drew abak ful fast;  
This geaunt at him stones cast  
Out of a fel staffe sling:  
But faire escaped child Thopas,  
And al it was thurgh Goddes grace,  
And thurgh his faire bering.

1064. *concerning Healfdene's war-chief*: fore Healfdenes hildewisan.

Grein, in *Lexicon* (1861), rendered this *fore* by *coram*, in the presence of, and accordingly Simrock translated Vor Healfdenes Heerkampfweiser; but subsequently Grein pointed out in Eberts' *Jahrbuch*, 1862, p. 269, that *fore* here signifies *de*, concerning, about, as in Pastoral 34, *þe ic ær fore sæde*, de quo antea dixi.

1068 a. *concerning the sons of Finn*: Finnes eaferum.

Kemble emended thus [*be*] *Finnes eaferum*; but other editors thought the preposition *fore* (1064) capable of governing also *eaferum*, the three intervening lines being parenthetical. [But now in ed. 5 Heyne supplies a preposition thus: *Finnes eaferum fram*.]

1069 a. *A mighty man of the half-Danes*: Hæleð Healfdena.

This is the reading of the MS. but Kemble (1833) thought the emendation *Healfdenes* was required (meaning 'A hero of king Healfdene's'); and this was adopted by Thorpe and Grein, and held its



ground until Grein's second text of 1867. Then he restored the manuscript reading, pointing out that the prefix ranked with such as 'spear-Danes, east-Danes, west-Danes, ring-Danes,' &c.

1069 *b. Hnæf the Scylding*: Hnæf Scyldinga.

Grundtvig supposed a lacuna after these words, and I have followed him.

1072. *of the Eotens*: Eotena.

This term, here, and 1087, 1141, 1145, appears to mean the people of Finn, the Frisians. It seems impossible to disconnect it from *eotenas*, giants, and yet the question is unanswered why the Frisians should have been so called. Bugge repeats a suggestion of Möller (*Volksepos*, 88 f.) that it may be through confusion with the Germanic people, whose name was latinized as *Euthiones* or *Eucii*, and who according to Möller were quite distinct from the *Jótar* or *Jútar*. *Paul und Braune*, xii. 1, p. 37.

In the legends of Sylt, Finn is the king of the dwarfs, and the Frisians are giants who have taken possession of the island as conquerors. A writer on these legends in *Blackwood's Magazine*, July, 1888, infers that Finn's elfish people are the same small race of which evidence is found in the caves of the Neolithic age, and of which the Esquimaux are the only survivors.

Although this tradition in making Finn king of the dwarfs, runs counter to our text, yet it agrees with it in a broader and more comprehensive matter, in identifying the Frisians with the giants.

1084. *sad remnant*: wéa láfe.

This poetic word *wéa láf* occurs in Wulfstan's *Homilies*, ed. Napier, p. 133.

1097. *loyally and unreservedly*: elne unflitme.

*Elne* suggests the medieval formula 'as a true knight,' *unflitme* without cavil; 'so dass der eid (der inhalt des eides) nicht streitig war.' Bugge, *Paul und Braune*, iii. p. 30. Something like the Latin formula *sine dolo malo*.

1098. *by constituted law*: weotena dóme.

In the Land Charters, 212 *l*, a violent and illegal occupation of certain lands is characterized as an act 'butan witenas dóme.'

1104 *b. with provoking speech*: frécnan spræce.

This is the Scottish *frack* as in Sir W. Scott's *Abbot*, c. 34, 'The frackest youth in Scotland,' where the foot-note explains *frack* as 'bold, forward.'

1115. *to flame*: sweolode.

On Dartmoor the burning of the furze up the hill-sides to let new grass grow, is called *zwayling*.

1129. *loyally and without cavil*: elne unflitme.

Here it seems impossible to keep the reading of the manuscript *mid*



*finnel unhlitme*, and almost every editor has tried his hand at emendation. I adopt Rieger's, who supposes the injured passage to have been a repetition of the formula which we have already had above, 1097. This emendation has received the support of Grein, who in his separate *Béowulf* (1867), abandoned his own emendation to adopt Rieger's. Grein's was [eðles] *unhlitme*, which was to mean 'unsolaced of home, deprived of his home.'

1133 ff. A charming bit to the tune of Horace's *Diffugere nives*, a version of which in Tottel's Miscellany makes a good echo to the text:—

The winter with his griesly stormes na longer dare abyde,  
The plesante grasse with lusty greene the earth hath newly dide.

1142 f. *military brotherhood, when Hun laid upon his breast (the sword) Lafing*: worod rædenne, þonne him Hún Láfing &c.

According to the emendations of Möller and Bugge, adopted by Heyne in ed. 5. Bugge's interpretation is, that to cover his designs Hengest became Finn's man, by the ceremonial act of his ally Hún, prince of the Hetware (Chattuarii), who is mentioned in the *Traveller's Song*, 33. The detaching of this proper name leaves the name of the sword *Láfing*, which, though not etymologically correspondent, seems related to the sword *Laufi*, *Lövi*, of the Norsk stories.

In ed. 4 Heyne had *worold-rædenne* as in the MS., and *Húnláfing* as one word for the name of the sword, which would be translated thus:—  
'Meanwhile he did not decline the usual courtesies of the world, when he (Finn) laid upon his shoulder Hunlafing, luminary of battle, &c.'

1159 f. *The Lay was sung to its end, the minstrel's descant*: Léod wæs ásunen, gléomannes gyd.

If there is any distinction to be made between the *léod* and the *gyd* it is this, that the latter is the minstrel's own addition, whether as prologue or epilogue—or else, that it is his variation or version of an old romance. The word *descant* signifies either musical variation or comment, and it is also used indefinitely for singing. Shakspeare, *Two Gent.* i. 2. 94: *Richard III*, i. 1. 27; iii. 7. 49: *Lucr.* 1134: *Pilg.* 184.

1162. *out of curious flacons*: of wunder fatum.

What curious ingenuity was lavished upon goblets and wine-jugs, cans and pails for liquor, may be seen in the Ashmolean and other Museums; see also T. Wright, *Celt, Saxon, and Roman*.

1164 a. *uncle and nephew*: suhtor gefæderan þâ git.

Hroðgar and Hrothulf, 1017. The first part *suhtor* is from the root *sugan* to suck, an expression of kindred, by reference to the same maternal breast. This remarkable compound occurs again, and about the same persons, in Widsith, *suhtorfædran*. It is strikingly like one



of the numerous varieties of compound known in Sanskrit Grammar as the Dvandva Compounds. This example has emboldened Professor Bugge to discover the same figure of speech in line 84, and thereby to propose a highly felicitous emendation.

The Dvandva Compounds are called by Professor Sir M. Monier Williams in his Sanskrit Grammar, § 746, Copulative (or Aggregative) Compounds; and he says that this class of compounds has no exact parallel in other languages. 'When two or more persons or things are enumerated together, it is usual in Sanskrit, instead of connecting them by a copulative, to aggregate them into one compound word. No syntactical dependence of one case upon another subsists between the members of Dvandva compounds, since they must always consist of words, which, if uncompounded, would be in the *same* case. The only grammatical connexion between the members is that which would be expressed by the copulative conjunction *and*.'

1164*b*. *up to that time was their natural affection undisturbed*: þá git wæs hiera sib ætgædere.

In *þá git*, &c., we have an example of that note of anticipating evil which is a character of this Epic poetry, and which is abundantly reproduced in the Nibelungen, e. g. st. 644, tr. Lettsom:—

Before the hall's grand staircase Kriemhild and Brunhild met;  
Bitterness or rancour on neither side was yet.

This feature of the old heroic poetry is often recalled by Mr. W. Morris; thus in *Sigurd* (1877), Book iii. p. 250:—

But as yet are those King-folk lovely, and no guile of heart  
they know,

And, in troth and love rejoicing, by Sigurd's side they go.

The catastrophe of the present allusion is not developed in our poem, nor was intended to be; it came to the author's hand stamped on his material, and he did not efface it; for it was not obscure to his audience, it was a well-known story, and as such the incidental notice of it was agreeable. It appears to indicate a prevalent form of tragic catastrophe in the ancient romances, as indeed it is universally the most sad and tragical thing in life, when those who once have loved are turned to deadly foes. This is the tragedy of the Nibelungen, and also of king Arthur's life. Curiously too, it is 'uncle and nephew' in Arthur and Mordred. Indeed it would take little additional evidence to induce me to believe that here we have the oldest extant trace of that domestic feud which ultimately became the property of the Arthur legend.

1190*a*. *the youth all together*: giogoð ætgædere.

Here we see that the young men (giogoð) had their own proper part



of the Hall, as the seniority (*duguð*) had theirs. The same rule and arrangement holds to the present day in College halls and chapels, in the Convocation House, and in the University church. The word *duguð* long continued to designate the high table or the place of the seniors in hall, and when the origin of the expression was forgotten in medieval times, the clumsy Latin substitutes betray the uncertainty which ensued. In a 'Consuetudinary of the Fourteenth Century for the Refectory of the House of St. Swithun in Winchester,' edited in 1886 by the Dean (Dr. Kitchin), the High Table is written *dig'*, and *digit'*, forms which in this and other documents have been supposed to represent *dignus* (as if *dignus locus*, place of honour) and *digitus*, but I venture to explain both these contractions from A. S. *duguð*. Other instances are quoted in the Dean's note at p. 38.

1190 *b.* *there the brave man sate*: *þær se góða sæt*.

Beowulf sate among the young men. We recognize a system in the arrangement of the hall. See description of the order of a Norse hall in Dasent's *Niala* and in Kingsley's *Hereward*, c. 4 (p. 94; ed. 1884). In *Odyssey*, iii. 416, it is particularly noted that the sons of Nestor brought their young visitor Telemachus into court, and seated him with themselves.

1193. *offered*: *bewægned*.

Found only in this place; Thorpe translated it *offered*, and this has been followed by subsequent editors.

1195 *a.* *a mantle and rings*: *hrægl ond hringas*.

These went together, the rings being the fastenings for the mantle. So mantle and brooch are coupled in an episode of the Bruce. In one of the conflicts that followed the defeat of Robert Bruce at Methven, he was so closely pressed as to be obliged, in a struggle, to abandon his mantle and the brooch that fastened it;—and a studded brooch, said to have been the one lost by Bruce on this occasion, was long preserved in the family of the MacDougals of Lorn. Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, Note 11, 'The Brooch of Lorn.'

1195 *b.* *The grandest of carcanets*: *heals béaga mæst*.

The term *heals béah* occurs only in one other place, viz. 2172, and there it indicates the same particular object—'that carcanet, which Wealhthéow, daughter of a prince, had given him.' The term *carcanet* occurs twice in Shakspeare, *Errors*, iii, 1, 4; *Sonnet*, 52. It is also used by Scott, in an interesting scene of *The Betrothed*, c. xi. See the New Oxford Dictionary, v. Carcan and Carcanet; where it appears how well the term fits, even etymologically, to *heals béah*.

1197–1214. *None superior . . . bed of death*.

Here comes in an old Lay, not recited at full length, but converted by the poet into narrative, and then continued by anticipation down to the fall of Hygelac.



1197. *None superior &c.* : Nænigne ic &c.

In a grant of Edgar's, A.D. 970, the preamble extols things heavenly by comparing them to precious necklaces—*superna ad instar pretiosorum monilium eligens*. Cod. Dipl. 566.

1199. *the necklace of the Brisings* : Breosinga mene.

Müllenhoff's correction to *Breosinga* (Haupt. xii) is a highly probable one. It rests upon the Icel. form *Brisinga men*; *eo* being merely the 'brechung' of *i*. In the Vocabularies we have '*Monilia menas*.' The manuscript has *Brosinga*.

Titus Manlius Torquatus got his cognomen from the *torques* which he took from the neck of a Gaul he had slain and put around his own neck.

Of the lasting importance of the Collar or Necklace, we may see an illustration in the following notice which appeared in the papers on February 7, 1891:—

'Notice is given in the *Gazette* by the Lord Chamberlain that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will, by command of the Queen, hold Levees at St. James's Palace, on behalf of her Majesty, on Tuesday, the 24th inst., and on Monday, the 9th of March, at 2 o'clock. It is the Queen's pleasure that presentations to his Royal Highness at these Levees shall be considered as equivalent to presentations to her Majesty. The Knights of the several Orders are to appear in their Collars on the 24th February (St. Mathias Day), it being a Collar Day.'

If the Brising legend is connected with Breisgau, may the 'bright hill' be *Clarus mons*, i. e. Clermont in Auvergne? The adjective 'bright' is a proper epithet for a lofty spot which is up in the bright and serene air, and often catches the light when lower parts are in darkness. Such were the strong places of old time, to one of which the captured treasure is carried. These elevated habitations are described in a phrase of the Septuagint (where our Hebrew text has no equivalent) as *ἀκρα οἰκούμενα τῆς ὑπ' οὐρανῶν*, Proverbs viii. 26.

The *Brisinga men* is the necklace of the goddess Freyia, and the locus classicus about it is in the most humorous of the poems in the Elder Edda, called by one of its titles the *Home-fetching of the Hammer* (Hamarsheimt). There is dismay and confusion in Asgard for that Thor hath lost his Hammer, and a messenger is dispatched to Giants' Land to make enquiry. The envoy discovers that the thief is the giant Thrym, and that he will not restore it unless Freyia will be his bride. The proposal is made to Freyia, and her rage was such that the Brisinga men which encircled her neck burst and fell to the ground. At this dead-lock the Anses took counsel again, and decreed that Thor must be dressed up as Freyia and go fetch his Hammer himself. After some resistance he yielded, and (in Mr. Sephton's translation)



They bound on Thor the bridal veil,  
 The Brising necklace too;  
 A bunch of keys they hung at his side,  
 As house-wife good and true;  
 Put woman's clothes about his knee,  
 A hood around his head;  
 Broad brooch upon his breast they placed,  
 That he the Giant should wed.

1200. *jewel and casket*: sigle ond sinc fæt.

This *sigle* is treated by Heyne as a pl. of *sigl*, sun (strong neuter), applied in a secondary sense to the brilliants and pendants of a necklace. But Sievers objects that he knows of no Declension in which a neuter *sigl* would give a plural *sigle*; and further, that he does not see what business a plural *sigle* has in this place between two singulars. He therefore thinks *sigle* (decoration) is a derivative word from *sigl* (sun) and ought to be ranged apart. Zacher's *Zeitschrift*, xxi. 3.—The casket of such a costly work would no doubt be a treasure in itself:—perhaps the Franks casket in the British Museum was designed to receive some choice specimen of the goldsmith's art.

1201. *chose eternal counsel*: gecéas écne ráed.

This has been taken to mean 'he died.' Heyne explains it as 'den ewigen Gewinn, das ewige Leben,' everlasting gain, everlasting life. But Bugge has made a careful study of the myth in Paul und Braune's *Beiträge*, xii. 69, and he finds that Hama entered religious life, and that this is the proper sense of *gecéas écne ráed*. His argument is in the highest degree interesting. He accepts the connection of *Brisinga mene* with Breisgau, and considers that region as the first home of the legend, after which he finds an Anglo-Saxon version, as in our poem, and lastly a Scandinavian version in the story of Heimdallr.

1202. *That collar &c.*: þone hring &c.

Here the poet by prolepsis tells the subsequent history of that necklace which Beowulf now received from Wealhtheow the queen. This leads him to mention the death of Hygelac, the event by which that *béah* fell into Frankish hands; and this brings in that story of Chochilaicus which is told by Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, iii. 3. In three other places within the moderate compass of this poem that story is recalled.

The gifts now given to Beowulf pass into the possession of his uncle and his lord, in the sequel 2148 sqq.

1208. *over the wave-bowl*: ofer ýða ful.

i. e. over the sea, which is likened to a bowl of liquor.

1212. *inferior combatants stripped the slain*: wyrsan wíg frecan wæl réafedon.



Holtzmann proposes to insert *næfre* before *wæl*, which would mean 'never did worse war-wolves strip the slain.' This certainly seems to afford more scope for the sense of *freca*, of which the point seems to be wolfish greed. In the Laws of Cnut, i. 26, the devil is called *se wóðfreca werewulf*, the ravening werewolf.

1214. *The Hall echoed with sound (of Music)*: Heal swége onféng.

The word *swég* is used for various sounds. What kind of sound was this? Was it the uproar of mirth and revelry, as in 644, and as Mr. Arnold takes it here? Against that, it is to be considered that this short sentence has a pointed air, and that it seems to assert some more definite relation to what has gone before. It should have a reference either to the bestowal of the carcanet, or to the Lay which celebrated its fame. If to the former, the *swég* should be applause; if to the latter, it should be music. The last interpretation seems to knit the whole together in the most compact manner. The word occurs in six other places in this poem. Four times out of the six it is used of musical sound. In the story of Apollonius of Tyre, music is called *swégcraeft*. The young daughter of Arcestrates sings to the harp before the company, who all praised her for her music—*ongunnon ealle þa men hie herian on hyre swégcraeft*, ed. Thorpe, p. 16.

1227 a. *loyal*: gedêfe.

MG. gadôbs as in Eph. v. 3, swaswê gadôb ist weiháim = καθὼς πρέπει ἀγίοις: Tit. ii. 1, thatei gadôf ist = ἀ πρέπει. The word in this place seems to convey that idea of fidelity and loyalty, which was ultimately matured into the idea of chivalrous friendship. The queen seems to engage him to be always in his conduct towards her son the same hearty open friend that he is now at this moment in the gaiety of social mirth; *healdende* keeping up the same bright aspect.

1228 ff. Compare *Girard de Roussillon*, § 307:—

Damoiseaux de ma mesnie, aimez-vous mutuellement.

1233 b. *Wyrd they knew not, the cruel destiny, &c.*: Wyrd ne cûðon geósceaft grimme.

Partly like 119 f. In both places it is a glance at coming grief. Compare Nibelungen, § 1364 (tr. Lettsom): 'Twas all unknown to either what after was to be.'

1245. *the ringèd mail-coat*: hringed byrne.

This piece of armour is often mentioned;—40, 238, 405, 1022, 1245, 1291, 1629, 2153, 2260, 2615, 3140. In Ulfilas *brunjô* occurs twice, Eph. vi. 14, 1 Thess. v. 8; in both places for θώρακα. It is known to the chief dialects; Icel. *brynja*, Swed. the same, Dan. *brynje*, OHG. *brunja*. (Dr. Murray is uncertain whether the word was borrowed from Old Slavonic *bronja* coat of mail, or vice versâ; or, thirdly, whether both took it from some common source, such as Old Irish *bruinne*



breast, might furnish.) The word passed into Romanic; Low Latin *brunia*, Old French *brunie*, whence the Mid-English of the same form *brunie*; other Mid-English forms, *brinie*, *brenie*, have a more Scandian look. Coats of ring armour have been found in graves which are assigned to the early part of the Iron age. Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, vol. i. p. 126.

1257. *long to maintain the war-tug*: lange þræge, &c.

This is inconsistent; for the interval between the encounter with Grendel and the visit of the troll-wife is the shortest possible. Here we have plainly an unaltered feature of the Lay in some previous condition as we may sometimes see a fragment of a Roman inscription built into the wall of a church. It is essential to the drift of the actual Romance, that Beowulf should not be kept overlong abroad. It is essential to his character, that he must hasten his work and return to his lord Hygelac. It is also necessary to the symmetry of the enlarged history, that due space be afforded to the scenes of his return in Gothland.

1258. *Grendel's mother*: Grendles móder.

The mother of Grendel has no proper name given to her in this poem, as the mother has of the water-giant Gargantua in Rabelais' romance, where she is called Gargamelle.

1260 ff. This seems like a reiteration of what has been already said above, 106 ff., but it is probably incident to the Second Part in its original character as a Lay by itself. It has the same right in the one place as in the other; but in a revised and finished Epic, one of the two passages would have been reduced to a mere allusion.

1266. *of branded creatures*: géosceaft gásta.

i. e. creatures whose wretched destiny was fixed long ago (*géo*). I cannot see the point of Heyne's rendering of *géosceaft gást*, vom Geschick gesanter Dämon, Demon sent by fate.

1297. *between the seas*: be sǣm twéonum.

For the explanation of this formula see my *English Philology*, § 459, ed. 5, p. 449.

1302 b. *the blood-sprent hag took away the well-known hand*: Héo under heolfre genam cúðe folme.

'If we must retain *heolfre*, I prefer Thorkelin's version: "Illa perfusa tabo sustulit familiarem manum." But I think we should read *héose* "amid the wailing." Thomas Miller (Göttingen) in *Anglia*, xii. 3.

1318. *accosted*: hnægde—should be *nægde* or *négde* from *négan* cognate to MG. *nêhwian*, of which the participle *nehwiandans*, ἐγγίζοντες, is found, Lk. xv. 1.

1320 b. *a restless night*: niht getæse.

In *Pastoral Care* (E. E. T. S.), p. 297, it is said that the angry temper,



if it receive a considerate answer, is soothed in feeling ; *bið getæsed on ðat ingeþonc*.

1345-1376. This is a fine piece of folk-lore in the oldest extant form ; and though it is essential to the action of the poem that the king should speak in unquestioning and sober earnest, yet the poet manages, nevertheless, to impart to the reader the impression that he is telling the tales of the country side. The authorities for the story are the rustics (*lond-buend* 1345, *fold-buende* 1355), while the touch in 1350 *þas þe hie gewislicost*, makes us regard the whole description as in a haze. Compare Mrs. Ewing, in *Lob Lie-by-the-fire*, p. 67 :—‘ The country people have plenty of tales of him,’ said Miss Betty, with some pride in the family goblin.

We sometimes look back with pride of superiority on times when men had a horror of the wild outer wastes, and imagined strange denizens prowling there. We at length in our day have grown more confident, we have laid aside superstitious fear, but perhaps we have lost something of sound and wholesome awe, springing from a just sense of the symbolism of nature, a sense which poets still acknowledge and confess. The following quotation from a former Professor of Poetry at Oxford may not be without a certain aptness here.

‘ But nature has another side, of which there is no indication in Keble’s poetry. We mean her infinite and unhuman side, which yields no symbols to soothe man’s yearnings. Outside of, and far beyond man, his hopes and fears, his strivings and aspirations, there lies the vast immensity of nature’s forces, which pays him no homage, and yields him no sympathy. This aspect of nature may be seen even amid the tamest landscape, if we look to the clouds or the stars above us, or to the ocean roaring round our shores. But nowhere is it so borne in on man as in the midst of the vast deserts of the earth, or in the presence of the mountains, which seem so impassive and unchangeable. Their permanence and strength so contrast with man—of few years and full of trouble ; they are so indifferent to his feelings or his destiny. He may smile or weep, he may live or die ; they care not. They are the same in all their on-goings, happen what will to him. They respond to the sunrises, and the sunsets, but not to his sympathies. All the same they fulfil their mighty functions, careless though no human eye should ever look on them. So it is in all the great movements of nature. Man holds his festal days, and nature frowns ; he goes forth from the death-chamber, and nature affronts him with sunshine and the song of birds. Evidently, it seems, she marches on, having a purpose of her own, with which man has nothing to do : she keeps her own secret, and drops no hint to him. This mysterious silence, this unhuman indifference, this inexorable deafness, has impressed the imagination of the greatest poets with a vague yet sublime awe. The



sense of it lay heavy on Lucretius, Shelley, Wordsworth, and drew out their souls' profoundest music. This side of things, whether philosophically or imaginatively regarded, seems to justify the saying, that "the visible world still remains without its divine interpretation." But it was not on thoughts of this kind that Keble loved to dwell.' *John Keble*, by J. C. Shairp, 1866, p. 111 f.

1346. *heads of Halls*: sele rædende.

I take this from Holder (1884), who renders 'saalgebietend, ein Haus besitzend.' The chiefs of families, masters of houses of (?) undivided families, formed an order of men who were recognized as the special depositaries of experience and wisdom. In 1702 the old house-master *eald éðelweard* remembers everything; and when we see this, the propriety of the expression here and at 51, is manifest and satisfactory.

So in the Peterborough Chronicle, 1127, those who saw and heard the hunt of the wild huntsman in all the woods between Peterborough and Stamford are vouched for as *sóðfeste men*, men whose character guarantees their report.

1351. *the other miserable wretch*: óðer earm sceapen.

This compound *earm-sceapen*, ill-starred, unfortunate, was employed as a euphemism for the fallen angels or devils, and means about the same as 'accursed.' Thus in Wulfstan, *Hom. xxix* (p. 136, ed. Napier), uton dón swa us mycel þearf ys, ondrædon us þone micclan dóm and ða micclan wita, ðe þær beoð þam earmsceapenan for heora ærdædum gegearwode = let us do as our great concern is, let us stand in awe of the great judgment and those huge pains which are there prepared for the unhappy ones because of their former misdeeds.

1355 f. *they know not about any father, whether they had any &c.*

Is this native tradition, or is it from a tincture of Biblical lore, about Cain's being destined to live and not to be slain? Or is it merely the utterance of abomination and abhorrency, rejecting the monsters from the tender incidents of mortal humanity, as unworthy to breed and have a pedigree? As a violent outcry against callous and brutal men, Robert Browning has:—

—The unmanly men, no woman-mother made,  
Spawned somehow!

*The Ring and the Book*, vi. 1548.

1359 ff. This description, coupled with that below at 1409 ff., is curiously matched in the description of a pool in Merionethshire, called Llyn-y-Dreiddiad-Vrawd, The Pool of the Diving Friar, the resting-place of a mountain stream, which is said to have no bottom; in *Crotchet Castle*, by T. L. Peacock, c. 14 and 16. This pool is said to have a legend attached to it, about a friar ever diving there for the philosopher's



stone—but where the author got it from, I do not know. Here is the description of the place :—‘ A path turning and returning at acute angles led down a steep wood-covered slope to the edge of a chasm, where a pool, or resting-place of a torrent, lay far below. A cataract fell in a single sheet into the pool; the pool boiled and bubbled at the base of the fall, but through the greater part of its extent lay calm, deep, and black, as if the cataract had plunged through it to an unimaginable depth without disturbing its eternal repose. At the opposite extremity of the pool, the rocks almost met at their summits, the trees of the opposite banks intermingled their leaves, and another cataract plunged from the pool into a chasm on which the sunbeams never gleamed.’ Happily, the author cannot have been indebted to our text, for it was hardly known when he wrote.

Compare also the description of Amsanctus in Virgil, *Aeneid*, vii. 563, and Lucretius, vi. 739 ff. In these stories there is an affinity which does not suggest imitation: the same substratum of legend seems to underlie them all. In Conington’s notes to Virgil may be seen the geographical identification and the physical description of the little mephitic tarn inland from Vesuvius, but we need not suppose that the poetical picture of an orifice to the dark world was suggested by that particular dell. Rather, they who had this picture already by tradition fixed in their imagination, found in that pestiferous hole a fitting illustration thereto.

Lucretius adds two other like instances of spots invested with the same horror, one in Attica, and the other in Syria, and then proceeds to correct the superstition—*janua ne posita his Orci regionibus esse credatur*.

In the picture of the dread place which our poem sets before us are combined a cascade, a pool, and a vortex or swallet, 1494. In the Buddhist legend there is a story which makes a whirlpool the avenue to a weird mansion. ‘Just before his attainment of Buddhahood, having eaten the rice given him by the girl Punṇā, we are told that he took the golden vessel which she had given him and said, “If I shall be able this day to become a Buddha, let this pot go up the stream.” Thereupon he threw it into the water, and it went eighty cubits, swiftly as a race-horse, up the stream; and there, diving into a whirlpool, it went to the palace of the Black Snake King.’ *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*, by S. H. Kellogg, D.D. (1885), p. 140.

Mr. Froude in *Oceana* has described a lake which he saw in New Zealand, the North Island, strangely like the mere in the Beowulf.

1363 *b. rimy groves*: hrimge bearwas.

The MS. has *hrinde bearwas*. Kemble, thinking of *rind*, translated this *lucus corticati* and *rinded groves* (1837): Thorpe followed with *barky groves*: Grein was at first disposed by Lye’s ‘*hrinan mugire*’ and Iccl. ‘*hrína sonare*’ to render ‘*rauschende*’ (as if *hrinende*) i. e.



howling groves, to which Heyne (1879) adhered. Grein, afterwards finding in Halliwell 'Rind, frozen to death,' and 'Rinde, to destroy,' assigned to *hrind* the sense of *erstarrt, abgestorben*.

But a discovery was made by Dr. Morris (1880) in editing the Blickling Homilies; for there, in a passage that asserts kindred with this, is found 'hrimge bearwas;' and this adjective *hrimig* occurs also in *The Ruined City* as an epithet of decay and drearied, thus:—*hrimige edoras behrofene*, dreary halls unroofed.

On *bearwas* compare Beda iv. 3, 'Ad Baruæ, id est, Ad Nemus.' See also *Land Charters*, Glossarial Index, v. *bearo* and *-bera*.

1385-8. *Every one . . . best memorial.*

Compare *Acneid*, x. 467 ff. :—

Stat sua cuique dies; breve et irreparabile tempus  
Omnibus est vitæ; sed famam extendere factis,  
Hoc virtutis opus.

1392 ff. Compare Psalm lxviii. 22, where the best interpreters seem to follow Ewald in understanding the words as quoted from an old song, and as referring, not to the chosen people, but to their enemies:— 'though they lurk in the recesses of Bashan eastward, or in the depths of the western sea, thence will I fetch them;' and in this sense it is expressed by the Revisers of 1885. Compare also Amos ix. 2:— 'Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea,' &c. Compare *Tasso*, vii. 85.

1401. *rode forth stately*: *geatolic gengde*.

Kluge objects to the established rendering of *geatolic* as 'stately,' and referring it to OHG. *gizal*, light, active, brisk, especially used of horses and arrows, he would render it here and elsewhere 'moving lightly' (*Paul und Braune*, ix. 189 f.). He is answered by S. Bugge in the same periodical (xii. 83), who shows that this sense does not fit into this place, for Hroðgar is not a young but an old man, and to leap lightly into saddle would be incongruous here. On this occasion S. Bugge makes a remark, which though obvious enough, is by no means superfluous, namely:— 'That the sense of a word must be ascertained and determined primarily by the evidences of its use and application, the office of etymology being secondary and in the way of confirmation or illustration.' But why (Bugge continues) is not the word formed from the stem *gatwō-* (fem. pl. *geatwe*)? He compares *searolic*.

*gengde*. MS. *gende*. This form, *gengan*, occurs for going on horseback in Andreas 1096, *wicgum gengan*.

1404b. *right forward (the warlock) had gone*: *gegnum fór*.



This has seemed to some critics incomplete for a second half-line, although the MS. is quite sound and plain here. Heyne completed it thus, *gegnum för* [þá]; but in his ed. 4 this is relinquished in favour of Sievers' suggestion [þær héo] *gegnum för*. Bugge suggested [hvar héo]: Holder (1884) keeps the simple reading of the MS.

1408. *Scion of ethelings*: æðelinga bearn.

i. e. Beowulf. 'Da überstieg der Edlinge Spross' Ettmüller, 1840. 'Es übereilte da der Edlinge Spross.' Grein, 1857.

1410. *strait lonesome paths*: ánpaðas.

Not 'lonely or solitary ways,' but as Grein says, 'ways with footing for one to pass,' which Bugge confirms by the present like use of *einstig* in Norway. Perhaps also *anstigo* in the *Land Charters*, see Glossary thereto. What is the meaning of the 'Ainsty of York?'

1420. *horror*: oncyð. The same word as in 830.

1424. *The troop all sate them down*: Féða eal gesæt.

In the Corpus Glossary (8th century): '*Falanx* fœða.'

1427. *nicors*: nicras.

This is the fourth occurrence of this word for water-monsters, water-goblins. See 422, 575, 1427. It survives in the phrase 'Old Nick.' It is a word of high antiquity, being found in the chief dialects: Icel. *nykr*, water-goblin; Dan. *nök*, *nisse*; Swed. *näcken*, sea-god; OHG. *nichus*, water-sprite, fem. *nichessa*; G. *nix*, fem. *nixe* (Skeat, v. Nick). I suppose the river *Neckar* that runs by Heidelberg is related. But Niccolo Macchiavelli, great as was his reputation for cunning, must be quite detached herefrom, notwithstanding the classical authority of Samuel Butler:—

Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,  
Though he gave his name to our old Nick.

1428. *procure*: bewitigað.

As if in the discharge of their natural and proper office. Compare 1135, and Elene 744. Also Tegnér's *Frithiof*, where a storm at sea is the work of goblins. Perhaps the fullest expansion of this motive is in *Tasso*, vii. § 115 to end.

1440. *wave-tosser*: wægþora.

Ettmüller has 'Wogenbringer,' adding the remark: 'Indem das Meerthier heranschwimmt, bringt es Wogen.' Grein (1857) 'Wogenerreger.' But perhaps the second number of the compound is not to be pressed. I am half inclined to agree with Schröer, who says: 'Ich glaube, das—þora ist hier nicht wörtlich zu nehmen, sondern wie in *mundþora*, *rædþora*, *wóðþora* = der einer sache waltete aufzufassen, also hier wogen-hüter, -herrscher.' *Anglia*, xiii. 335.

1442. *in knightly armour*: corl gewædum.



I grudge the proleptic anachronism of 'knightly armour,' but I am bound to translate; and 'eorlish weeds' would hardly be translation. The application of this word *gewáde* and 'weed' to defensive armour, lasted through the two periods. In Layamon 23708, 'mid scelden and mid cnihtes iwede' = with shield and knights' weed, and 23774—

þe king mid his weden	The king with his weed,
leop on his stede	leapt on his steed;

and in 23858—

mid scelde mid stede	with shield with steed
mid alle his iwede.	with all his weed.

Sir Bevis has the expression 'in iren weed.'

1451. *encircled with princely wreathings*: befangen fréa wrásum.

In later romances the decorations of the helmet or basnet are sometimes described in detail. Thus in a Scotch Romance of the fifteenth century, *Rauf Coilzear*, 464 ff. (E. E. T. S. Extra Series, xxxix):—

His basnet was bordourit, and burneist bricht  
With stanes of beriall cleir,  
Dyamountis and sapheir,  
Riche Rubeis in feir,  
Reulit full richt.

i. e. his helmet was bordered and brilliantly garnished with stones of transparent beryl, diamonds and sapphire; rich rubies also therewith, arranged with perfect art.

1456. For the loan of a sword of reputation at an important crisis, compare *Tasso*, vii. 72.

1458. *hafted blade*: hæft mece.

It was Dr. Vigfusson who first pointed out that this compound, unique in Anglo-Saxon literature, occurs (substantially) in *Grettis Saga*, where is *hepti-sax*, an expression which is equally singular in Scandian literature. The author of the *Saga* moreover treats the word as curious and strange, by the explanation which he offers of it. There must be some common source, perhaps an ancient Lay of the Dymble-fight. See Vigfusson, *Icel. Dict.* v. Hepta; and *Icelandic Prose Reader*, p. 404.

1459 a. *the edge was iron*: ecg wæs iren.

This boast of iron is strikingly in accord with Tacitus, *Germania*, vi:—'ne ferrum quidem superest, sicut ex genere telorum colligitur.' And again, xlv:—'rarus ferri, frequens fustium usus.'

1478 f. *that thou to me wouldest ever be, after my departure, in the place of a father*: ðæt þu me á wære forðgewitenum on fæder stæle!

K. Köhler (*Der Syntaktische Gebrauch des Inf. u. Particips im Beowulf*. Münster, 1886, p. 69) regarded *forðgewitenum* as a dative

absolute, and he translated it 'me defuncto ;' whereas it is appositive to *me* in the former line, and the construction is 'mihi defuncto.' This I take from *The American Journal of Philology* for October, 1889, not only for its own sake, but also to call attention to an admirably written and well reasoned article, entitled 'The Absolute Participle in Anglo-Saxon,' by Morgan Callaway, Jr. The conclusion is historically important, and confirms what I had long dimly suspected.

1489. *the curious damasked sword*: wrætlic wæg sweord.

The first thing to be observed here is that the manuscript is quite sound, and that the text is *wæg*. Holder (1884) makes it appear as if we here had only a transcript to look to, and he adopts Kluge's emendation *wæl*. The compound *wæg sweord* is singular and obscure. Thorpe emended *wīg*-, and as *wīg sweord* is nowhere found, he justified it by a process, appealing to *gíð sweord*. So also might Kluge argue, that if *wæl sweord* is unknown, there are *wæl-sceaf*, *-scax*, *-spere*. Still, when all is said, it does tell against these emendations that the forms are not extant, while the reading *wæg* is there. Grein translated 'wuchtiges Schwert,' weighty sword, followed by Heyne. Rönning (*Beowulfs-Kvadet*, p. 17) suggested 'billow-sword,' the sword with which Beowulf had fought the monsters of the deep, 556. But the expression *wrætlic* characterizes it as a masterpiece of art, and the prefix *wæg* would be appropriate to the surface of a blade damascened with gold. (Should we correct to *wecg*? Compare Vcb. 'Cuniullus lytel wære,' where we must read 'wæcg.') The situation indicates that the grand treasure-sword (1023) had been left behind, because it was not a fighting sword, while Hrunting, an edge of high repute, had been borrowed of Unferth for the daring task ; and the spirit of Beowulf is displayed in thinking at such a moment of his obligations and bequeathing to Unferth an ample equivalent.

1495. *a portion of the day*: hwil dæges.

In *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, c. xxiii, where the subject is the manners of the Swiss, and the time they spent at table, an indefinitely long and tedious time is described as *une partie de la journée*. 'La seule chose sur laquelle je ne jouissais pas de la liberté, était la durée excessive des repas. J'étais bien le maître de ne pas me mettre à table ; mais quand j'y étais une fois, il y fallait rester une partie de la journée, et boire d'autant.'

1517. *an eerie lustre*: blácne léoman.

See note on 2769. Such a mysterious light is described by Sir Walter Scott in the following lines :—

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall ;  
Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone,  
Of polished marble, black as funeral pall,  
Carved o'er with signs and characters unknown.



A paly light, as of the dawning, shone  
 Through the sad bounds, but whence, they could not spy;  
 For window to the upper air was none;  
 Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry  
 Wonders that ne'er till then were seen by mortal eye.

*The Vision of Don Roderick*, stanza 13.

1536. PRAISE : lof.

I regard this as the central word of the poem. I do not say that it is exactly so numerically, though even in this sense perhaps it would not be very far removed from the middle. The poem is not so perfectly preserved, as to afford a statistical test. But were it even further from being literally exact, it would still be true in a figure. For it is in a manner the key-word of the poem; it occurs in the first page (in a marked manner) and then here in the midst, and besides these times, only once more, and that is in the last word of the poem. Here only does it occur in the simple form, the other two are compounds.

It sometimes took the form *love*, in which it was liable to be confused with a different word. Thus :—

Thrughe the the more loue that I wanne,  
 That more desyre I ne canne.

Weber, ii.

This word is now extinct in English, but lives in German *lob*. The Psalter of 1539 has the latest instance I know; there it appears as a verb *loaue*, with lengthened vowel: 'That they wolde exalte him also in the cōgregacyon of þ<sup>o</sup> people, and loaue him in the seat of the elders.' Psalm cvii. 32. It may be doubted how far the succedaneous word *louage* was due to *lof*, and how far to the French *louange* from *louer* *laudare*. In Lord Berners' translation of Froissart, the words in the opening sentence *je veux traier et recorder histoire et matiere de grand' louange* are thus rendered :—'I syr Johñ Froissart wyll treat and recorde an hystory of great louage and preyse.' See Introduction, p. ciii.

1550 ff. *miscarried* . . . *had not* . . . *holy God* &c. Hæfde þá for-síðod, &c.

And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
 And saved him. Tennyson, *Elaine*.

The situation of the hero in this, the second act in the combat, is surprisingly like that of Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in the second act of his combat with Apollyon; another evidence of continuity in the traditions of romance. 'Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now: and with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began



to despair of life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword,' &c.

1557. *a monumental cutlass*: sige éadig bil.

i. e. a sword which had been crowned with victory, and consequently had been stored up as a memorial.

The same incident is again met with in the mediæval Latin romance of *Guy of Warwick*, written by Gerard of Cornwall, and embodied in the *Liber de Hyda*. See Mr. Edwards' edition (Rolls Series, p. 121). There Gwido fights the Danish champion Colbrond, whose epithet is *inhumanus*, and when his own weapon was broken he seized one of a store that Colbrond kept nigh at hand, and slays him with his own axe. This famous weapon was carefully preserved (so the story runs) in the vestry of Winchester Cathedral, and was popularly known as Colbrond's axe.

1570. *The glimmer flashed up*: Lixte se léoma.

Here Heyne understands *léoma* of the sword, like *beado-leoma* 1523; as if the sword had shone out and given a light. But how gratuitous is this, when we have been told above, 1516 f., that there was a *fýr leoht*—a *léoma*—shining in the place. And what then is the application of *inne*? The poet says *leoht inne stód*, and this Heyne translates as *a gleam came out of the sword*. Thus:—

die Waffe blitzte, von ihr gieng ein Schein.

The meaning seems rather to be that the death of the hag was a relief to nature, and the light, before so pallid (1517), now grew luminous and genial. For this is the effect of *hádor*, and this temperament of the word is kept in that pleasant German epithet *heiter*. We have had it above of the cheery song of the minstrel (497). The death of the troll-wife seems to break a spell, and (as it is said below, 1620 f.) purges the realm of waters.

Thus the gladness born of victory in Beowulf's heart (*geséh*, 1569) is further raised by the expansion of a serene light *like the light of the sun*, his exhaustion is averted, and he proceeds to explore the place. Here we feel that the poet was not a barbarian of a low type.

The following is in a different frame and on a different scale, but some analogy may perhaps be discovered. 'But he is harking back to *care-vent* when a clock strikes, and a stern "You may go," judicially and massively spoken like a sentence of acquittal, empties the room. Whew! to breathe the blessed air again! *O refrigerium*. Purgatory over for a week! The very gravel of the quad smiles underfoot, the green ivy laughs on the wall. What matters it to us that to-morrow is Black Friday with its crowded school hours and much Euclid? What matters anything at all? We have been up to Teddy—and here we are!' *A*



*Memory of Edward Thring*, by J. H. Skrine, Warden of Glenalmond, 1889, p. 21.

1575. *done with*: *fracod*.

Was not rejected and flung away. An uncommon word; only this once in *Beowulf*. See Grein, v. *fracod*. It is not found (says Grein) in any of the kindred dialects. Besides Grein's instances it appears in *Cura Pastoralis*, 32, 21; 33, 21; 45, 14; 136, 22; 137, 21; Ælfric, *Hom.* ii. 292 b, *fracodlice sacian* disgracefully quarrel, of a drunken affray. Also in Ælfric's Life of King Oswald in Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, line 206.

1598. *inasmuch as the more part were of opinion*: *þa þæs monige gewearð*.

This is a remarkable use of *geweorðan*, in which that verb is impersonal and governs an accusative. Thus *monige* (manige) is acc. plural. In Andreas 307, where the captain asks of Andreas how he came to think of entering upon a voyage without money, he begins thus:—*Hic gewearð þe þæs, wine leofesta, þæt þu, &c.* Several examples in Grein, v. *geweorðan*, § 5. In *Land Charters*, p. 77, a testator provides that in case of death of one or more legatees, a surviving legatee is to buy the land *suae hit thonne geworthe*, which I have translated 'as it then stands.' But Kemble had emended *hie* for *hit*, which thus would bring it within the present category, and it would mean 'as may be agreed upon between them,' i.e. purchaser and remaining party interested. This poem has one other example of this structure, 2026. In 1996 f. Grein takes it in the same manner, but Heyne otherwise.

1610. *unwindeth the ropes of the torrent*: *onwindeð wæl rāpas*.

The MS. has now only *wæ*, but *a* and *b* have *wæl*. Grundtvig conjectured *wæg-rāpas* in *Beowulf's Drape* (1820), p. 291. This was accepted by Kemble, who in his Glossary (1837) rendered *wæg-rāp*, *funis undarum*, i.e. *glacies*: followed by Thorpe (1855), but rejected by Grein (1857) for the MS. reading, which he refers to the root of *well* fons, and writing the *æ* long, he translated *wæl-rāp*, *vinculum gurgitum*, i.e. *glacies*. Holder (1884) has *wāg*, but Heyne, ed. 5 (1888), *wæl*.

The Vocabularies have '*Gurges wæl*,' and Wright says that a whirlpool is in Lancashire called a *wcele*. In Ælfric's Grammar: *Hic gurges* þis wæl oððe deop wæter. In Gnostic Verses (Cott.) 39, leax sceal on wæle mid scéote scríðan. In Ps. lxiv. 7, conturbas profundum maris, þu gedrefest deope wælas. This is probably the second part in the name Polwhele, anciently Polwheele. It is therefore in harmony with oldest English when the Laureate uses *wells* for the great waters:—

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine.

*In Memoriam*, x.

The natural object before the poet's eye is the rope-like icicles that



fringe the water-fall or other rapid water; e.g. the cascades which salmon leap.

On the verbal prefix *un-* in modern English, *on-* in the text, see my *English Philology*, § 606 a, *un-* (2)—p. 595 in the fifth edition.

1621. *spacious haunts*: éacne eardas.

Bugge thinks this is for *eatna eardas*, i.e. eotena, 'haunts of the giants,' observing that the Beowulf manuscript often has (Northumbrian) *ea* for *eo*. See *beorn* 2035, *cafor* 2152, *Eafores* 2964.

1630. *sullenly the Mere subsided*: lagu drúsade.

Sievers demurs to Heyne's explanation, especially his 'stagnieren, faulig werden;' and adds his own impression as follows: 'Ich denke, nachdem Beowulf aus den fluten emporgetaucht und an das land gestiegen ist, liegt nun das blutgefärbte wasser (nachdem sich die wellen beruhigt haben) in öder einsamkeit da.' *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* (Zacher), xxi. 3, p. 365.

1636. *of the lusty and stalwart fellows four were required*: sela módigra féower scoldon.

I follow Grein (1867) and Holden (1884) in putting the colon after *æghwæðrum*: not after *sela módigra* as Heyne, and as Grein had done in his first (1857) text. By that punctuation the meaning would be:— 'with severe toil for every one of them though lusty and courageous four were required,' &c.

1649. *and the lady withal*: ond þære idese mid.

That is to say, the sight was shocking to the warriors and to the queen who was in the hall with them. I have great doubt about this translation, and I am more than half inclined to follow Thorpe, who stands alone in rendering, 'and the woman's also,' i.e. the head of the mere-wife. This does not tally with the rest of the narrative; and yet it strikes me that this best fits the text, the question of consistency apart. But Ettmüller, Grein, and Heyne, all understand the queen, and I defer to their united opinion.

1680. *ancient workmanship of giants*: enta ær geweorc.

Dr. Gudbrand Vigfusson thought that this *enta* is not of giants, but of dwarfs or elves. He identified the expression with *dvergasmíði*, dwarfs' work, for things of rare and curious art, like the enchanted swords. See his *Icelandic Dictionary*, v. *Dvergr*. But the sword to which this hilt belonged is described above in 1562 as giants' work, *giganta geweorc*.

1681 a. *a work of mystic smiths*: wundor smiða geweorc.

I know not how to convey the meaning better than by this form of expression. For I do not understand the poet to mean a work of smiths of extraordinary cunning, who produce wonderful masterpieces of art (as Heyne, who renders *wundor smið* by Schmid, der wunderbare Arbeit fertigt); but rather as smiths of wonderland, of Fairyland; mythical, heroical, romantic smiths. But in the translation we



must not admit any expression which suggests that the story is not true; this would do violence to the spirit of the poet. For although he was as well aware as any critic of the nineteenth century that he was relating fairy tales, yet he had inherited such respect for tradition, and he was so alive to the poetical truth of the fable, that his seriousness is simple and sincere, as free from hypocrisy on the one hand as it is from any touch of the mocking banter of Ariosto, on the other.

The best exponent of this prefix *wundor* that I can think of in English poetry, is Tennyson's 'mystic, wonderful.' And compare the use of 'mystic' in *Paradise Lost*, ix. 442.

1681 *b. and so when* : ond þá &c.

Müllenhoff rejects this *ond*; and Bugge agrees with him. He regards *þá þás woruld of geaf*, &c., as the exegesis of *æfter deófla hryre*. But this fails to satisfy.

In order to render a satisfactory account of the construction here, we must view the passage as a whole, from 1677 to 1686. In this paragraph the same one fact is stated in triplicate, the fact namely that Beowulf gave the hilt to Hrothgar. It is as if the device of parallelism were extended from a series of words or phrases to a series of sentences. I take this to be a genuine and well-preserved epical feature.

With *ond þá þás woruld*, begins a new statement (the third), and I have taken *ond* as equivalent to 'and so.' If it is not patient of this treatment, it must be abolished. Schröer (*Anglia*, xiii, Neue Folge, i. 3) says that we may cancel it without scruple, for that it is only an error of the scribe, who wrote ʒ for a semicolon, like what he has observed in his work on the *Regula Benedictina*.

1687-1698. In this description of the writing on the sword, we see the process of transition from heathen magic to the notions of Christian times. On the altered spirit of the description from the old myth as seen in the *Voluspa*, see Ettmüller's note.

The history of the flood and of the giants, and probably also the memorial of the person who ordered the sword to be made, were substitutes for names of heathen gods, and magic spells for victory. In 'The Charms of Sigrdrifa, which she spake to Sigfred,' the first runs thus:—'Runes of victory thou must know, if thou wilt have victory, and grave them on thy sword-hilt, some on the rims, some on the carnage-brands, and mark a two-fold Tý.' *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, vol. i. p. 40.

All nations have applied writing to magical uses, heathens, Christians, and Mahomedans. Christians, however, have done it only while half-weaned from heathenism. But with Mahomedans it is a persistent practice. Browning has in *Paracelsus*, ii. 1:—

Like a Turk verse along a scimitar.



Two centuries later, all such incised writing on swords was ascribed to demons. Thus in *Solomon and Saturn*, ed. Kemble, p. 144 :—

áwritað hie on his wæpne  
wælnota héap,  
bealwe bók-stafas;  
bill forscrífað, &c.

They write on his weapon  
death-writs many,  
baleful characters;  
the bill they bewitch, &c.

1700 ff. This discourse is pronounced by Müllenhoff to be 'a Sermon which is inappropriate in more senses than one—eine in mehr als einer Hinsicht unpassende Predigt.' But, if a 'sermon' can take place in an epic at all—and what is there of human practice that can be absolutely denied to an epic?—it might perhaps be allowed in the mouth of an aged king who had seen great trouble, addressing the young hero by whom his deliverance had been achieved. And as to the topics—what more repeated lesson in history than the depravation of the hero into the tyrant? Timophanes the brother of Timoleon, Don Gomez in Corneille's *Cid*, Shakspeare's *Coriolanus* . . . but why enumerate?

Sermon or no sermon—this is a speech fit for an old king to speak to a daring youth towards whom he has declared a fatherly affection, based upon adequate motives in the antecedent events. The first achievement was followed by rewards and rejoicings, the second brings rewards and seasonable reflections. The speech is well placed, in my opinion, and it produces the fine effect of a moral culmination.

Ay but, say the critics, this is an epic, and not a didactic poem! To which I would answer that the epic is permitted to be also didactic, so long as all is done in the way of action and narrative, for speech narrated is also action. The speech of old Phœnix to Achilles in *Iliad*, ix, is wonderfully like this, and the resemblance is the more striking from the fact that it is a resemblance in spirit with hardly any common features in detail. Whoever will compare these two speeches will be likely to admit that Hrothgar's address to Beowulf does not lack high precedent, whatever else may be said of it.

For those who think that the Beowulf is a fortuitous agglomeration of patchwork, the question has but a feeble interest, and indeed it is not clear in what sense such critics can say of any part that it is either appropriate or inappropriate. Such terms seem to postulate a motive and a purpose animating the whole. But for those who see unity of aim in the poem, this passage is of the highest interest, as a perfectly natural centre-piece. For it may be said that the aim and moral of the poem as a whole, is precisely this—to correct the besetting sin of the warrior. Arrogance in the hero, and contempt of inferior men, cancels the merit of heroism. The warrior must not despise the gentle virtues of civil life. It is only by modesty and respect for others that he will get his merits recognized and rewarded. Next to the grand example of



high devotion in a great cause, this is the moral of the poem, and, as a matter of scheme, it is fitting that this, like a key-stone, should find its place in the centre of the work.

But, it may be asked, is such a moral worthy and befitting an epic poem? To this I can only answer, that if any one moral can be assigned to the *Iliad*, it is—as intimated in the opening lines—this very moral, and no other.

1702 f. *that this eorl was born superior*: þæt þes eorl wære geboren betera.

Bugge (after Munch) proposes, *þæt þé eorl nære geboren betera*, that warrior better than thou art was never born.

1709 b. *Heremod did not prove so*: Ne wearð Heremód swá.

Among the deterrent examples in this poem, Heremod is the only one that is avowedly introduced for an instructive purpose, and with a moral personally applied. He appears as an important factor in the chief interpretation of the poem. His character is like that of Tasso's Gernando:—

Non ha la terra uom più superbo alcuno:  
Questo sol de' suoi fatti oscura il pregio.

*La Gerusalemme Liberata*, iii. 40.

A prouder knight treads not on grass or ground,  
His pride hath lost the praise his prowess won.

Tr. Fairfax.

Müllenhoff's contention (*Untersuchungen* (1889), p. 50 f.) that the name *Heremód* in this place is merely a personification of haughtiness and violence must be admitted as possible, and it may prove an important factor in the interpretation of the poem.

1713. *his boon companions*: béod genéatas.

See 343 and note. This seems to mean that he smote his mess-mates in their mirth, especially as this is just what Beowulf is honoured for not having done, below 2179.

For aye accursed in minstrel line,  
Is he who brawls 'mid song and wine.

W. Scott, *The Lord of the Isles*, ii. 18.

1722. *settled disaffection of his people*: léod bealo longsum.

I am not satisfied with this translation; but I cannot bring myself at present to accept Bugge's interpretation, 'the lasting pains (of hell).'

1722b-1724a. *Do thou . . . told this tale*: þú þé lǣr . . . wintrum fród.

This apostrophé appears to me to be the most vital part of the whole poem—a sort of central luminary. In it the living poet steps forward

out of his Hrothgar, and turns his eyes to the prince for whom he made it up.

1723. *understand the ornament of man*: gum cyste ongit.

Compare the words of King Arthur in Tennyson's *Guinevere*:—

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

It is as if the old king Hrothgar had said:—‘Do not fall into the mistake of fancying that your preterhuman success will exempt you from danger, and the common liabilities of men. When Heremod found he had no match, the heroic warrior sank into a hectoring bully, and he became intolerable, and was driven forth from human society.’

1729. *but all the world moves to his mind*: ac him eal worold wendeð on willan.

Compare the following from *The Tragedy of Cardinal Wolsey*, by Thomas Churchyard:—

Thus, in short time, I had the world at will.

The following also will appear no very inept utterance as regards the general drift of our ‘sermon’ in this part:—

But when men think they most in safety stand,  
Their greatest peril often is at hand.

Michael Drayton, *Barons' Wars*, Canto vi. Stanza 44.

1747 b. *the crooked exorbitant counsels of the damned sprite*: wom wundor bebodum wergan gastes.

Compare *Blickling Homilies*, vii. init. *werigra gasta*.

Elsewhere simply *werig*, as a substantive, e. g. *Andreas*, 1171, *hæfde weriges hiw*, he had the look of the evil one. Grein, v. *werig*. ‘Auld Wearie’ is used in Scotland, or was used a few years ago, like ‘Auld Hornie’ or ‘Auld Clootie,’ to mean the devil. *American Journal of Philology*, v. 4; p. 471. ‘Weary fa’ = a curse befall; Jamieson, v. *Weary*.

Compare:—

O! weary on him! he ne'er brought gude to these lands.

*Tales of my Landlord*, i. 71.

O! weary fa' thae evil days!

*Ibid.*

For the matter, compare *Tasso* (tr. Fairfax), v. 18:—

The hidden devil that lies in close await  
To win the fort of unbelieving man,  
Found entry there where ire undid the gate,  
And in his bosom unperceived ran;



It fill'd his heart with malice, strife, and hate,  
It made him rage, blaspheme, swear, curse, and ban,  
Invisible it still attends him near,  
And thus each minute whispereth in his ear : (&c.)

1760. *enduring counsels* : éce rædas.

i. e. the eternal principles of justice, rectitude and humanity. Compare 1201 ; where however the meaning is more doubtful.

1766. *glance of eyes* : éagena bearhtm.

This word *bearhtm*, which here indicates the flash of the malignant eye, is used above, 1431, for the sharp clear note of a clarion. The allusion here, as Mr. Arnold observed, is to that ancient superstition of the 'evil eye' which appears in Virgil, *Ecl.* iii. 103 :

Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.

where Forbiger (1845) refers to Plutarch, *Conv. Disp.* v. 7 and xxix. 4 ; Gellius, xvi. 12. This is one of the oldest and most universal superstitions of the world, which, being found everywhere, from China to Peru, must be regarded as self-originating. To this hour it is in active vigour in Italy, and the jewellers who make charms against the *mal occhio*, find their profit in a persuasion which causes much misery. The glittering eye of the late Pio Nono brought him under this imputation ; and it has been deliberately used as a political weapon. The enemies of Gambetta succeeded in affixing upon him the *mauvais œil* ; and in December, 1888, a Bonapartist organ in Paris was not ashamed to circulate this monstrous form of defamation against President Carnot.

1788. *fair banquet served afresh* : fægere gercorded niowan stefne.

So when Henry VIII in masking guise visited Cardinal Wolsey in the midst of a banquet, we read in Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey* :—' Then in came a new banquet before the king's majesty, and to all the rest through the tables, wherein I suppose were served two hundred dishes or above, of wondrous costly meats and devices, subtilly devised.'

1794 a. *promptly was he, &c.* : sóna him sele þegn, &c.

Now torch and menial tendance led  
Chieftain and knight to bower and bed.

W. Scott, *Lord of the Isles*, iii. 7.

1794 b. *weary of adventure* : síðes wergum.

Compare the words of Ipomydon after his three days' jousting :—

Slepe I must withouten fayle,  
For I am wery for travayle.

Weber, ii. 333.

1801 f. *until the black raven announced heaven's glory with a blithe heart* : oð þæt hrefn blaca &c.

The *hrefn blaca*, black raven, here, is a bird of good omen; but the dusky raven, *se wonna hrefn*, below 3024, is the herald of carnage. The latter bird exists in nature:—does the former also exist, or is it a poetic and mythical creation? Perhaps it is the black-cock, one of the principal ornaments of the British fauna, and still well known over most of western Europe. Of the habits of the black-cock Selby says: ‘During the months of autumn and winter the males associate and live in flocks, but separate in March or April; and, being polygamous, each individual chooses some particular station, from which he drives all intruders, and for the possession of which, when they are numerous, desperate contests often take place. At this station he continues every morning during the pairing season (beginning at day-break) to repeat his call of invitation to the other sex, displaying a variety of attitudes, not unlike those of a turkey-cock, accompanied by a crowing note, and one similar to the noise made by the whetting of a scythe.’ I take this from *The Penny Cyclopædia*, v. Black-cock.

In *The Lord of the Isles*, v. 13, when the beacon-fire blazed out ‘portentous, fierce, and far,’ among the tokens of its influence, ‘the black-cock deem’d it day, and crew.’

1802. *Then came bright light striding over shadow: þā com beorht [léoma || ofer scadu] scacan.*

Here I have left Heyne, and have followed the text of Grein (1867); not, however, without some deviation. Grein has *scacan* [*ofer scadu*], by a change for the worse (as I think) from his text of 1857; where he had [*ofer scadu*] *scacan* appealing to *ofer sceadu scíneð* in Phenix 210. I think there is good sense in Möller’s observation (Altengl. Volksepos 141):—‘It is natural to suppose that the lacuna would occur in one place, and not on both sides of the word *scacan*.’

1810. *said his thanks for the loan: sægde him þæs léanes þanc.*

The MS. has *léanes*, which might suggest a very different turn to this incident. It certainly is possible, without altering the text, to take it in the sense that Unferth presented as a parting acknowledgment to Beowulf the sword with which he had before furnished him on loan.

1812. *that was a high-souled lad: þæt wæs módig secg.*

The magnanimity of Beowulf is brought to light by his generous applause of the sword that had not served his need; and towards Unferth of all men, whose nature was grudging of praise to others. Repeatedly Unferth is used as a foil to Beowulf. See Glossary of Proper Names.

1822–1835. A remarkably interesting passage. Beowulf departing pledges his services to Hrothgar, to be what afterwards in the mature language of chivalry was called, his ‘true knight.’ Even so near to our time as the French Revolution the King of Sweden assumed this title of devotion to the Queen of France.



'Has not King Gustav, famed fiery *Chevalier du Nord*, sworn himself, by the old laws of chivalry, her knight? He will descend on fire-wings, of Swedish musketry, and deliver her from these foul dragons,—if, alas, the assassin's pistol intervene not!' T. Carlyle, *French Revolution*, II. iv. 3.

1826 ff. The passage in the Romance of Guy of Warwick (E. E. T. S., Extra Series, No. xlix. p. 370) where Guy takes leave of Tirri to return to England is so exactly analogous to this passage in the situation, and so like it in the topics, that it might almost seem an expansion of it. Guy had been the deliverer of Tirri, a knight whom he had found ruined, crushed, and bruised, both in his own person and in his dearest relations, and Guy had restored him to health and prosperity, and the fulfilment of his desires. At parting he declares at length to Tirri, that if he is wanted again he will return—

Anon riȝt sende after me,  
Ichil come anon to þe.

Compare 2067 and note.

1836. *if moreover Hreðric, &c.*: gif him þonne Hreðric.

i.e. if the young prince is an aspirant for matriculation at any of the Gothic courts, proceeding thither for his education.

1855–1865. An ideal picture of international amity according to the experience and doctrine of the eighth century, or else according to romantic tradition current at that time. It is interesting to compare a historical ideal of the sixteenth century, as depicted in the Life of Cardinal Wolsey by Cavendish. When Wolsey came home out of France, he convened an assembly of notables in the Star Chamber, and explained to them the cause of his embassy and its results. Part of his report runs thus:—'The peace thus concluded, there shall be such an amity between gentlemen of each realm, and intercourse of merchants with merchandise, that it shall seem to all men the territories to be but one monarchy. Gentlemen may travel quietly from one country to another for their recreation and pastime; and merchants, being arrived in each country, shall be assured to travel about their affairs in peace and tranquillity; so that this realm shall joy and prosper for ever. Wherefore it shall be well done for all true Englishmen to advance and set forth this perpetual peace, both in countenance and gesture, with such entertainment as it may be a just occasion unto the Frenchmen to accept the same in good part, and also to use you with the semblable, and make of the same a noble report in their countries.'

1862. *across the bath of the gannet*: ofer ganotes bæð.

A just and beautiful designation, which evidences a true observation of nature. The gannet is a great diver, plunging down into the sea



from a considerable height, such as forty feet; and therefore the sea is very graphically called the bath of the gannet.

1875 f. 'Why,' asks Sievers, 'should the old king weep, if he hopes that they shall meet again?' *Paul und Braune*, ix. 140. He therefore proposed to read—

þæt he [hine] seoððan geséon [ne] móste  
módig[n]e on meðle.

Kluge (*ib.* 190) thinks that a comparison of *Andreas*, 1012, which is a manifest imitation of this passage, will obviate the demand for so much alteration. He would therefore only change *he* into *hie*, and take *geséon* (as in *Andreas*) to mean 'see one another again,' *sich wieder sehen*.

Bugge (*ib.* xii. 96) goes along with Kluge so far as to admit that the imitation in *Andreas* vouches for *hie . . . móston*. But he agrees with Sievers as to the necessity of the sense, and this he proposes to secure by the following emendation (comparing 567):—

þæt hie seoðða[n ná] geséon móston.

He observes that in the MS. not only has *seoððan* at the end of a line lost its final letter, but that there is room in the line for another short word.

1878 ff. *but deep in the affections of his soul &c.* The usual way of understanding this passage is somewhat as follows: 'but taken captive in his soul with strong affection the warrior secretly longed after the beloved man against the tie of blood.' Sievers in *Zacher*, xxi. 3, prefers Thorpe's rendering. Thorpe saw that *langað* was a noun and not a verb—also that the verb must be found in *beorn*, which he took as *born* (i. e. *barn*), translating thus: 'fast in bonds of thought, after the dear man, longing secretly burn'd against blood.' I have thought rather of *be-arn*, as in line 67.

1885 ff. *That was a king, . . . terror to many*: þæt wæs án cyning, &c. The gist of their talk as they went along the path towards the shore. Compare 1925 and note.

1886. *without reproach*: orleahre.

Only this once in all Anglo-Saxon poetry:—and here it is not a mere epitheton ornans, like the Homeric ἀμύμων, but a personal attribute of character, like Tennyson's 'blameless king.' And this is in keeping with the whole portrayal of Hrothgar; he is a perfect king over a perfect court, as may be seen by the terms of Beowulf's report to Hygelac, 2014 and 2144. And this ideal king is exhibited in all the chief lights of circumstance; in prosperity, in adversity, and in the happiness of restored peace. We may compare the praise universally accorded to Bayard:—

Le bon Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.



1900. *gold-bound*: bunden golde.

In the *Wergild Code*, ii. 10, among the insignia of a þegen as opposed to a ceorl, appears 'golde sæted sweord.' Schmid, *Gesetze*, p. 398.

The progressive elevation of Beowulf is well indicated at this stage of the narrative by making him a bestower of military honour. For I think there is more in it, than that the Boat-warden held higher place thereafter because he had a handsomer sword than others: his glory seems to have consisted in the fact that it had been given him by one competent to confer degree and rank. And as for the characteristic of the sword that it was 'gold-bounden,' it should be noticed that the golden pommel and hilt of the sword ranked in the middle ages among the insignia of knighthood. And that is the meaning of Dante's line—

. . . . . ed avea Galigajo  
Dorata in casa sua già l'elsa e il pome.

*Paradiso*, xvi. 102.

Galigaio had already in his house the gilded hilt and pommel, i. e. he was already of knightly rank. Compare 2884.

1902 *b. the more worshipful by reason of that decoration*: máðme þý weordra.

The sword was a decoration; being both an ornament and a distinction, κόσμος and κῦδος; as in *Iliad*, iv. 145:—

ἀμφοτέρων, κόσμος θ' ἵππων, ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος.

The heroic warrior is a fountain of honour: Beowulf had conferred rank by his gift; the boat-warden would henceforward be a 'sworded squire.' Nibelungen, tr. Lettsom, § 32.

1903. [*The Gothic captain with his band of warriors.*] Here the defect of the alliteration shews something wrong. Grein mended it with [ýð] *nacan*, which Heyne adopts. Bugge finds this metrically unsatisfactory, and thinks there is a lacuna, which he thus fills:—

[Ealdor Géata  
mid his wíghéape] gewát him on nacan.

1905–1919. This passage has a remarkable general similarity to *Iliad*, i. 480–486: which can spring only from the simple and true portrayal of the incidents most prominent in the voyage and beaching of a ship in ancient times.

1906. *the sea-timber hummed*: Sund wudu þunede.

Der Seebaum dröhnte, Ettmüller. It is that indescribable humming music of satisfaction and peace which a ship makes when spinning along in full sail—'The soft victorious song of the breeze through the rigging, musical, self-contented, as of bird on bough.' Charles Kingsley, *Prose Idylls*, 'North Devon,' p. 269.

1910. *with gorgeous prow*: bunden stefna.

Perhaps the reader will be the more ready to admit the word 'gorgeous' here, when he considers that it is etymologically connected with ornate apparel of the throat, OF. *gorgias*, gorget, F. *gorge*, throat. See Skeat, v. *Gorgeous*.

1912. *the keel grated up ashore*: Ceól up geþrang.

Compare Byron, *Corsair*, i. 4:—

Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.

1917. In *Odyssey*, ix. 136 ff. (the picture of an ideal harbour) no mooring-tackle is needed; you have only to strand your ship, and leave her in perfect security till she is wanted again to put to sea.

1925. *the building was magnificent, &c.*: bold wæs betlic, &c.

From this to the end of the canto must be understood as a glimpse at the conversation of the travellers, related obliquely. 'The building was magnificent, the king was'—so they talked—'majestical,' &c. Compare 1885 and the note there.

1929. *she was howsoever not mean-spirited*: næs hío hnáh swá þeah.

That is, she held up her head, was not timid, was able to hold her own, was equal to her royal position. Heyne in his metrical version (1863) has

Nicht liess sie sich zu sehr herab, noch kargte.

She was not chargeable with that default of rank for which Hotspur pretends to rate his wife in *Henry IV*, First Part, iii. 1.

This is Heyne's interpretation. But the Icelandic *hnöggr* and the Swedish *njugg*, and the first syllable of our *niggard*, suggests the doubt whether *hnáh* in this place may not signify 'mean, base' in the sense of grudging, illiberal; and then the next line would be an expansion of the same idea.

1932-1941. Kemble (*Beowulf*, 1837, p. xxxv) first pointed out that this story about a mythic queen of a mythic Offa is identical with the story related in the *Vita Offæ Secundi* concerning the historical Offa of Mercia and his wife Cwendrida. Grein completed this discovery by the observation, which had escaped Kemble, that *þrýðo* is the name of the queen, who is *Drida* in the Latin text, and that it is of her, and not of Hygd, that the dark tale is told.

This story seems to pursue the family of Offa; the enormities related of his daughter Eadburh in Asser, *Vita Alfredi*, anno 855, come to the same thing. Next to the Latin texts, the best place to read these stories is in Freeman's *Old English History for Children*.

1935. *openly*: andæges.

'Auge in Auge,' Suchier, *Paul und Braunes Beiträge*, IV. Heyne in his metrical version, 'unverstohlen.'



1942. *peace-weaver*: *freoðu webbe*.

An epic designation for Woman. In Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, Act 1, v. f., when Götz is told that his sister has accepted the proposals of a man whose attachment he desires, he says to her:—'Ich danke dir, Schwester! Du kannst mehr als Hanf spinnen. Du hast einen Faden gedreht, diesen Paradiesvogel zu fesseln.'

Kemble saw in this expression an evidence of the great importance which attached to marriage alliances, at a time when the Family was the unit of the State; an importance which is traceable through medieval history, but which tends gradually to disappear 'under the conditions of our modern, mercantile society.' *Saxons in England* (1849), i. 234. The word occurs again in the *Traveller's Song*, 6.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to confine the sense to the peace-making value of woman in international alliances; her beneficent social influence seems here to be contemplated, as in a passage of Spenser which has much in common with this place, *F. Q.* iv. 2, 19:—

And that which is for Ladies most besitting,  
To stint all strife and foster friendly peace, &c.

1943. *a false pretence of injury*: *lige torn*.

'Erlogener, grundloser Zorn,' Grein (1857); a fictitious complaint, a pretended vamped-up offence. Bugge, *Zacher*, iv. 208.

1965. *spacious foreshores*: *wide waroðas*.

The word *waroð*, shore, occurs in one other place of the *Beowulf*, namely 234. See Weigand, v. Werder. Near Weston-super-Mare in the parish of Wick St. Lawrence the shore is known as 'The Warth.' This I have from my friend the Rev. W. F. Rose, vicar of Worle.

1968. *bancsman of Ongentheow*: *bonan Ongenþeowes*.

i.e. Hygelac; yet it was Eofor who actually slew Ongentheow, 2486 ff.; and Hygelac rewarded him with the hand of his only daughter, 2997. Are we to see in this an illustration of the principle recorded by Tacitus that the achievements of the followers were attributed to the chieftain?

1977. *He sate then by the king himself*: *Gesæt þá wið sylfne*. Compare *Nibelungen*, § 1233 (tr. Lettsom):—

To the seat he brought him whereon himself he sat.

1980. *With bombards of mead*: *meodu scencum*.

The term *bombard* for a vessel to carry liquor in, occurs three times in Shakspeare; *Tempest*, ii. 2, 21; *Henry IV*, First Part, ii. 4, 431, where Prince Henry calls Falstaff 'that huge bombard of sack;' and *Henry VIII*, v. 4, 85.

1983. *to the hands of the warriors*: *hælum tó handa*.

Such is the reading of Heyne in his edition 4; and of Holder (1884).



The MS. has *hæ num* with the erasure of a letter (Zupitza thinks *ð*) between the *æ* and *n*. It was Grein who proposed *hælum*, and this has been generally accepted, until Bugge defended the MS. reading, making it a tribal name, of which the nominative is *Hæne*, which he thinks a contracted form for *Hæðne*, dwellers on the heath, in this case the heath of Jutland, for he regards the *Géatas* as Jutes. He finds an analogous form Icel. *Heinir*, of a people inhabiting a Norwegian heath-land. Heyne has in edition 5 followed Bugge, and he reads *Hænum tó handa*. Though I have not adopted this emendation, I feel the attraction of it, and also the force of Bugge's objection to *hælum* as a grammatical form. It is but a doubtful inference (as he says) from a nom. *hæle* for *hæleð* to a dat. pl. *hælum* for *hæleðum*.

1992. *I seethed with anxiety therefor*: Ic þæs mōd ceare . . . séað.

See note on 189.

2026. *so hath it pleased the Friend of the Scyldings*: hafað þæs geworden wine Scyldinga. See note on 1598.

2035. *a prince of the Danes amidst the high company*: dryht beorn Dena duguða bi werede.

I take *beorn* from Kluge's emendation, and *bi werede* from Grein's: both approved by Bugge. Heyne retains the text of the manuscript *dryht beorn . . . biwenede*, and he understands it thus:—'That may well mislike the ruler of the Heathobards . . . when he comes with lady into Hall, (while) a noble scion of the Danes waited upon the high company, i. e. handed them their cups.'

2037. *harness*: mæl. This word applies to any grand, monumental, highly esteemed object, especially a piece of armour.

2041. *one who observes them both*: se þe bá gesyhð.

Heyne reads with the manuscript *se þe béah gesyhð*, one who observes the decoration. Grundtvig and Grein and Bugge, at wide intervals of time, have severally condemned this *béah*, at least as a substantive meaning a collar or personal decoration. Grundtvig would make it a verb with *gesyhð* for its object, *one who bent his observation*; Grein would put *bill sword*, in its place; and Bugge proposes to read *se þe bá gesyhð*, he who sees them both together, i. e. Freaware attended by the Dane who wore the sword despoiled of Froda the father of Ingeld. This emendation I have followed.

2067 ff. *Therefore I esteem not &c.*: þý ic &c.

This concluding observation helps to justify such a long digression in the middle of Beowulf's speech, and to redeem it from the charge of excessive rambling. For Beowulf at the moment of his departure from Hrothgar had pledged himself to return with help if needed; and it was natural that this engagement should be on his mind, and that he should wish to prepare Hygelac's mind to co-operate. This narrative sustains a harmony with what is said in line 1826 ff.



2076. *there was the battle fatal to Hondscio*: þær was Hondscio hild onsæge.

It is now accepted that Hondscio is a personal name, though the idea was utterly rejected by Grein when proposed by Grundtvig. There are two things in its favour; first, the complete identity of structure with 2483; and, second, a local name in the Textus Roffensis in a royal Kentish grant of land purporting to be of A. D. 738; where the property lies 'in regione quae vocatur Hohg in loco qui dicitur Andscohesham,' *Cod. Dip.* 85; Thorpe, *Dipl.* p. 24; in my *Land Charters*, p. 33. Possibly a trace of the name may yet stick to some farm in the district about Cliffe, at Hoo, near Rochester.

The word *onsæge* is one that occurs several times in the poetic intensity of Wulfstan's preaching; see ed. Napier, pp. 128, 159, 243.

2085. *grasped*: grápode.

In later times this verb has become restricted in sense to the act of laying hold of objects to find way in the dark. But even after it had taken the modern form *grobe*, it occurs in the earlier sense of grasp, as in the following from Weber's *Metrical Romances*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, 1957:—

The stedes thai gunnen by mane grope,  
And lepen on sadel withouten stirope.

2105. *glee*: gléo.

This is the only place in *Beowulf* where the simple *gléo* occurs; we find the compounds *gléo-béam* harp, *gléo-dream* social joy, *gléo-man* minstrel, in *Beowulf*; and in the Boethian *Metra*, ii. 4, there is an interesting parallel to this passage as combining *gléo* with *gid* in another manner—glíowordum gól gyd æt spelle, with cheery words he chanted a stave in his discourse.

In the Corpus Glossary of the eighth century there are three instances of this word: *Cabillatio*, glio; *Facetia*, glio; *Gannatura*, gliu. These all point to talk of an amusing and entertaining kind; *cabillatio* may be suspected of scandal. Rabanus Maurus has *gannatura* in the sense of *moquerie*, *raillerie* (Du Cange).

2116. *took our delight*: níode náman.

What is the exact sentiment of this word *níod* or *néod*? Heyne's elaborate definition amounts to something like 'polite entertainment' or 'decorous gaiety.' In the bilingual Chronicle (F), 1042, 'wel lærde to his agenre neode' is expressed in the Latin thus: 'docuit eum ea quae sibi facienda erant ad honorem suum.'

2147. *into my own disposal*: on [mín]ne sylfes dóm.

Here I do not follow Heyne's text, who has adopted Grundtvig's emendation *on [sín]ne sylfes dóm*, at his own choice or selection. The text which I have translated is from Kemble's emendation, followed by Thorpe and Grein.



2148 ff. *them will I render unto thee, &c.*: þá ic þé, &c.

Tacitus says that the companions win their glory not for themselves but for their captain. Compare 2988. So in *Guy of Warwick* (E. E. T. S. Extra Series, xlii), line 1040, the hero sends off messengers immediately after the emperor's tournament back to England to Warwick to carry his prizes and convey a particular report:—

This present 3e schullen vnderfong,  
& wende þer-wiþ into Ingland,  
& present þer-wiþ bi mi word,  
Rohaut, mi kinde lord.

2157. *the pedigree thereof*: his ærest.

Such is the sense required, but the expression *his ærest* is so unexampled as to make editors uneasy. Conybeare emended *ærend*, and Thorpe adopted the emendation; but it hebetates the passage. Heyne, ed. 4, v. secgan, suggested *his [ór] ærest*, which would give the meaning: 'That I should first report to thee the origin (or previous history) of it.' But it was dropped in ed. 5.

2178–2200. This is the culminating point of Beowulf's youthful manhood; and it is characterized by appropriate marks. The combination of valour with gentleness which is the very ideal of the best age of chivalry, is the first part of his character. Then it is observed that the greatness in him had long been unsuspected and he had passed for a very ordinary lad, till things took a turn. Now comes the crowning ceremony of the poem, and it may be added a ceremony than which ancient kings had no greater distinction to bestow, the ceremony of presenting a sword of honour, which, in the present instance, is enhanced to the utmost by the historic quality of the blade.

With the sword was conveyed to him a vast Honour of 7000 hides, a mansion, and a judgment-seat.

2210 b. *until one began*: oð þæt án ongan.

Compare line 100, and the note there.

2219. slæpende be fyre.

According to Zupitza the MS. has slæpende be syre . . . , and this observation removes the incongruous *tableau* of a dragon napping by his ingle nook.

2224. That the man who first seized the golden spoil should be a runaway from his master is strangely like the qualification for the successor to the Arician priesthood. A fugitive slave must first steal the golden bough and then vanquish the sword-girt priest, the Rex Nemorensis. Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 271; *Ars Am.* i. 259; Statius, *Sylvæ*, iii. 1. 55; Suetonius, *Caligula*, 35. The rôle of the Dragon and that of this King of the Wood had analogy;—he is thus described by Strabo, v. 3. § 12, ξιφήρης οὖν



ἐστὶν αἰεὶ, περισκοπῶν τὰς ἐπιθέσεις, ἕτοιμος ἀμύνεσθαι. Macaulay, *Lays*, 'Lake Regillus'; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. i. p. 2 ff.

2253. *or furbish the bossy tankard*: oððe feor[mie] fátet wæge.

To the references in Grein, v. feormian 4; add *Be Dómes Dage*, ed. J. Rawson Lumby, E. E. T. S. (1876), line 77:—*hwi ne feormast þu mid teara gyte torne synne*: why dost not thou scour away with flood of tears grievous sins? And *afeormung* glosses purgamen in *De Consuetudine Monachorum* (Cott. Tib. A. iii), ed. Logeman, in *Anglia*, xiii; see Glossary, *ibid.*

2260. *the ringèd mail*: byrman hring.

Literally, the ring of the mail-coat. A bold synecdoche, which appears in a still stronger form in 1503, and in the epithet of the *Hring-Dene*.

2275. *hold in awful dread*. *His portion is to &c.*

This is after Zupitza's emendation [*swiðe ondra*]da[ð]. *He gesecean sceall* [ho]r[d] on hrusan.

Heyne's text in ed. 4 was [*wiðe gesaw*]on. *Hé ge*[wunni]an sceall h[lá]w [under] hrusan . . . which would mean 'they have seen far and wide. His portion is to inhabit the earth-domed tumulus,' &c. In ed. 5 Heyne keeps *wiðe gesáwon*; but for the rest he has adopted Zupitza's emendation.

2284. *quantity of jewels carried off*: onboren béaga dæl.

The *on-* here and in the infinitive *onberan* above, 990, is the old *and-* (Greek ἀντι-) which is well preserved in the German *ent-*, as *entführen*. This degenerate *on-* has been further disguised in modern English by assuming the form of *un-*. *English Philology*, § 606 a; '*un-* (2)'. The reading *onboren béaga* [dæl] is Bugge's emendation.

2285. *the friendless man*: féa sceaftum men.

On the unhappy condition of a lone man in early society, see Keary, *Dawn of History*, p. 90.

2290. *hard by the dragon's head*: dracan heáfde neáh.

Like Dante coasting round the body of Lucifer.

2327. *That was to the goodman*: þæt þám góðan wæs.

Here 'goodman' may appear too ordinary a title; but I have adopted it under the impression that the late and familiar use descends from a more dignified association of the same title in an earlier time. This common adjective *gód* appears in many places where a more pointed sense seems to be called for. In Chron. A. 871, *þær wearð Hēahmund bisceop ofslægen and fela góðra manna*, it seems hardly adequate to translate 'many good men'; it must mean 'men of eminence.' We find *gód* classed with terms indicating nobility, as in Blickling, *Wæs he for worlde swýðe æðelra gebyrda and góðra* = He was in worldly position of very noble and 'good' connections. In the Benedictine Life of St. Willibald (Mabillon iv. p. 369) the following looks like an Anglicism: in *nonnullis nobilium bonorumque hominum praediis* = on some estates of

noble and 'good' men; where we can hardly err if we translate it back thus: 'on sumum hámum eorla and gódra manna.'

2329 ff. *the wise man felt as if &c.*: wénde se wísa . . . . bitre gebulge.

I take this in the sense in which Mr. W. Morris makes Gunner express his rage and desperation at a blighting crisis:—

So he turns from her face and the chamber with his glory so undone,  
That he saith the gods did evil when the mighty work they won,  
And wrought the Burg of the Niblungs, and fashioned his fathers' days,  
And led them on to the harvest of the deeds and the people's praise.

*Sigurd*, Book iii.

The temptation was the same as that which Job's wife laid in the path of her husband, when she said: 'Curse God, and die.' I follow Wackerbarth (1849) in translating *wealdende* by 'Providence.'

A like passion occurs in *Iliad*, xii. 164, where a discomfited hero breaks out thus (tr. Pope):—

With shame repulsed, with grief and fury driven,  
The frantic Asius thus accuses heaven:  
In powers immortal who shall now believe?  
Can those too flatter, and can Jove deceive?

In humble life the same tragic incident comes up:—

A limb was broken when they lifted him;  
And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
Another had crept too across his trade,  
Taking her bread and theirs: and o'er him fell,  
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.

*Enoch Arden*.

2332 b. *in a manner unwonted with him*: swá him geþýwe ne wæs.

This upholds a high standard of piety for the hero. So W. D. Howells, in 'The Shadow of a Dream,' 1890; when for a moment he lets his coryphæus admit a thought which he cannot explicitly describe, retains by a similar clause his general character for elevation:—'I said to myself that if I were Nevil, for example, and I were in love with the heart of this material bliss, I should certainly let no fantastic scruple bar me from possession. I cannot exactly say how the formulation of this low thought affected me with a perception of Hermia's charm in a way it was not apt to make its appeal.'

2334. *the sea-board front*: éalond útan.

Not the island off the coast (Fahlbeck); but 'the water-washed land



on the (its) outside,' i. e. the face of the sea-board. So Bugge in *Paul und Braune*, xii. 1. p. 5. The word 'utan' seems to convey some such a sense as 'the outward aspect of the sea-board,' the maritime frontage of the country. Compare Sax. Chron. A 897 fin.: hie ne mehton Súd Seaxna lond utan berowan.

2337 ff. Putting this together with 2669 ff., we may ask whether Ephes. vi. 16 has had any influence here.

2345 ff. *Then did he . . . think it scorn &c.*: Oferhogode þá.

So Guy of Warwick, when he undertakes to fight the dragon, waives the king's offer of a hundred knights, and chooses only one particular friend, and two other knights. E. E. T. S. xlix. 376. See note on 425.

2367. *of the foreshore waters*: sioleða.

This is but a make-shift rendering; the word is obscure. Can it possibly be for *sceoleða* shallows? See Skeat, v. Shallow.

But the essence of the feat is not obscure, and in the age of chivalry we have the same achievement performed on horseback. In *Sir Beues of Hamtoun* (E. E. T. S. Extra Series, xlv. line 1811) the hero when pressed by Saracens swims on horseback across the sea:—

Beues smot is hors, þat it lep  
In to þe se, þat was wel dep.  
Whan he in to þe se cam,  
Ouer þa se, y wot, a swam;  
In a dai and in a niȝt  
A bar ouer þat gentil kniȝt.  
Whan he com of þat wilde brok,  
His gode stede him resede & schok.

2373 ff. The situation and conduct of Beowulf in this passage finds a parallel in that of Frithiof in the 22nd Lay of Esaias Tegnér, entitled 'The Election of a King.' This passage was selected by Goethe out of Tegnér's poem as a specimen for translation in his 'Volks poesie.' I subjoin the first stanza in the Swedish with Goethe's German:—

*Konungavalet.*

Till Tings! Till Tings! Budkaflen går  
kring berg och dal.  
Kung Ring är död! nu förestår  
ett kungaval.

*Die Königs-Wahl.*

Zu Ting! zu Ting! Eilbotschaft geht  
Von Berg zu Thal:  
Fürst Ring ist todt, bevor nun steht  
Die Königs-Wahl.

2383. *the Swedish realm*: Swio rice.—Name identical with the enchorial designation of the kingdom of Sweden at the present day, 'Sverige.'

2393. *a friend to Eadgils in his desolation*: fēa sceaftum freond, folce gestēpte.

Leo's emendation of *fēond* for *freond* has caused much needless disturbance. Heyne accepted it, and used some ingenuity to maintain it—reading *gestēpte* (from *gesteppan*, instead of *gestēpte* from *gestēpan*) in order to fit it to *sunu Ohtheres*, i. e. Eadgils. Violent means to bolster up a gratuitous emendation, where Grein, Müllenhoff, and Bugge see no occasion for change. Beowulf's revenge upon the Swedes was effected through his support of the exiled Eadgils, whom he with an army restored to his country, slew the reigning king (Onela, uncle to Eadgils), and apparently put Eadgils in his place. Ettmüller's translation (1840) had it thus:—

mit Volk' er stützte  
über's Seegefilde den Sohn Ohtheres,  
mit Recken und Rüstung:—der rächt' es seitdem  
mit kalten Kummerfahrten, den König er fällte.

2430. *held me as his own*: héold mec ond hæfde.—See note on 658.

2433 f. Curiously like Tacitus, *Germania*, 20: 'Sororum filiis idem apud avunculum qui ad patrem honor.'

2433. *as a varlet in the castle*: beorn in burgum.

This term Varlet or Valet has sunk in the social scale; Chaucer was a Varlet. Cotgrave (1611) under Valet says: '*In old time it was a more honorable title; for all young gentlemen, untill they came to be eightene yeres of age, were (as at this day Batchelers in Britaine are) tearmed so; besides, those that waited in the King's Chamber (and who were, for the most part, Gentlemen) had no other title then of Valets de Chambre, untill that Francis the first, perceiving such as attended him to be no better than Roturiers, brought in, aboue them, another sort, and caused them to be stiled, Gentilshommes de sa chambre; presently after which the Title of Valet grew into disesteeme, and is, at the length, become opposite unto that of Gentilhomme.*'

2436. *a bloody bed . . . strown*: morðor-bed stréd.

Rieger objects to this bed-making figure, not that it is ineffective, but that it is too ignoble:—and he would read *stýred*, arranged, ordered, prepared. Zacher's *Zeitschrift*, iii. 409.

2438. *his high kinsman*: his fréo wine.

The MS. has *his fréa-wine*, but Bugge asks: How could Herebeald be called Hæðcyn's *fréa-wine*, his lord? He would therefore correct to *fréo-wine*, a term which occurs above, 430, and which Grein renders *amicus nobilis*, and which we may fairly translate noble brother, high kinsman.



2448. *cannot bring him any help*: helpe ne mæg . . . . ænige gefremman.

Heyne keeps the MS. reading *helpan*, and in his Glossary institutes a weak feminine *helpe* express for this place. Whereas Kemble and Thorpe had long ago made the emendation *helpe*, acc. of strong noun *help*; and this correction is asserted to be the only true reading by Sievers, *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, xxi. 3; p. 357.

2453. *the riders*: ridend.

The substantival use of this participle is very rare. Grein has no example but this. Adjectivally it is in Peterborough Chronicle, 1114, 1085. This *ridend* (pl.) is in form like *scéotend*, shooters, archers, 703, 1154. It is the only expression in the *Beowulf* which suggests mounted warriors; as a foretaste of chivalry. It admits of another interpretation; it is possible to render it 'riders' as now spoken of in civil life. The knightly order in England got not their name from riding, as in French 'chevalier' and German 'Ritter,' though *ridere* had a brief career among us: Chronicle of Peterborough, 1085, 1090.

2461. *the solitary one in memory of one (departed)*: án æfter ánum.

'Um den verlorenen einsam klagend.' Heyne (1863). This *after* and that two lines below is just the 'after' of the old Runic epitaphs.

2473 a. *over wide water*: ofer wíd wæter.

'The wide water is, no doubt, the Mälar sea or lake, which formed the boundary between the Swedes and the Goths or Geats.' Thorpe.

2493. *with flashing sword*: léohtan sweorde.

The single place in the *Beowulf* where the sword has an epithet like this, that can be rendered 'gleaming' or 'flashing,' a circumstance that seems rather strange when we remember the frequent coruscation of Virgil's swords, and the obvious readiness of such an epithet.

2501. *of my prowess*: for dugeðum.

Grein took this to mean 'in presence of the troopers,' 'vor den Dienstmännern' (1857), and this was generally accepted. So Heyne (1863), 'vor der Ritter Schaar,' before the warrior band; producing a picture like that in *Tasso*, vii. 64 (tr. Fairfax):—

Or as I was, when all the lords of fame  
And German princes great stood by to view,  
In Conrad's court (the second of that name)  
When Leopold in single fight I slew.

But this is now discredited. The passage seems to be but an old man's reminiscence of youthful vigour (like that of Nestor in *Iliad*, iv. 318) unmixed with glorification; and Heyne has long ago come into Ettmüller's sense 'aus Tapferkeit' (1840), and to render 'in Tüchtigkeit,' i. e. in doughtiness. But he forgot in ed. 4, and his younger editor Dr.

Socin has forgotten in ed. 5, to remove the traces of the abandoned rendering, which still persist under *for*.

It may be as well to notice a third rendering, 'for proof of valour, for pre-eminence, for mastery;'—this rests on an error, to which an Englishman is more liable than a foreigner. In our modern English the prevalent sense of the preposition *for* is that of aim, purpose; but this usage had in the old language no existence as yet.

2523. *blast and venom*: *oreðes and áttres*.

Here I take Grein's emendation (1867). The MS. has *reðes 7 hattres*, which Heyne edits thus: *réðes and-háttres*, fierce opposing blast; making for the nonce a substantive *and hátor* otherwise unknown.

2525. *not a foot space*: *fótes trem*.

So Maldon 247, *fléon fótes trym*; 275, *nolde fléogan fótmeál landes*, would not flee a foot-measure of land. So Guy of Warwick, when he promises to fight the grisly pitch-black Saracen giant, vaunts he will not flee a foot:—

& þei he be þe deuels rote  
y schal nouȝt fle him a fote.

E. E. T. S. xlix. 442.

2530. In Geoffrey, x. 3, Arthur when about to fight the giant, 'ordered his companions to leave him to deal with him alone; unless there was an absolute necessity, and then they were to come in boldly to his assistance.' Tr. Giles.

2549. *the hero . . . survive*: *déor gedýgan*.

Heyne retains the MS. reading *déop*, which he makes to be as a neuter noun, 'Tiefe, Abgrund,' cliff, precipice. This was translated by Ettmüller (1840) *zur Tiefe kommen*. It does not appear to me that any one has brought a tolerable sense out of this reading. Thorpe (1855) changed the verb, and he read *gedýfan*, rendering thus: 'he might not near to the hoard unburn'd for any while deep dive, for the dragon's flame.' This emendation has had no support. Grundtvig (1861) reiterated the emendation he had long ago proposed, namely *déor*, meaning beast, wondering that it had not been noticed by Grein. Bugge now approves this emendation, but in the sense of 'the brave one,' i. e. Beowulf.

2552. *the stout-hearted stormed*: *stearcheort styrmde*.

Compare *Merchant of Venice*, 'Why look you, how you storm.' 'This is a well-preserved old expression.

2562. *Already . . . had drawn sword*: *Sweord ær gebræd*.

The same verb for drawing a sword continued through the medieval romances; thus in *Ipomydon* 2044, Weber, ii. 355:—

Ipomydon hys swerd out-brayd.



2570 a. *advance upon him with headlong shuffle*: *scriðan tó, gescife scyndan*.

Müllenhoff (Haupt xiv. 233) pointed out that the MS. reading *to gescife scyndan*, which used to be rendered 'hastening to his doom,' is poor stuff;—he assigned *tó* to *scriðan*, and proposed for *gescife* to read *gescife = gescýfe*, on the authority of a Gloss printed in Haupt ix. 468 b:—*'per præceps niðorscife,'* with marginal note *niðerscéofende*. One of the happiest of emendations.

2584 b. *the war-bill had failed*: *gúð bill geswác*.

Compare the description of the dragon in *Guy of Warwick*, 7161:—

þe smallest scale þat on him is  
No wepen no may atame ywis.

E. E. T. S. xlix. 376.

and again, line 7211:—

With a spere he him smote strangly,  
That was keruing sharply;  
The spere to shyuers all to-flighe,  
And the body ne come it not nyghe.

2589 a. *he must consent to &c.*

Grein and Heyne read *sceolde* [wyrmes] *willan*; but Rieger proposed *sceolde* [ofer] *willan*, which Bugge prefers, and which I have adopted.

2599. *In one only of them*: *Hiora in ánum*.

Among the faithless, faithful only he.

*Paradise Lost*, v. 897.

2613. *whom, when a lordless exile, Weohstan had slain*.

This is after Grein's later text, in his separate edition (1867); *wræccan wineléasum Weohstán bana* [adopted in Heyne's ed. 5].

2633–2660. 'Turpe comitatus virtutem principis non adaequare.' Tacitus, *Germania*, xiv.

2640 b. *and promised rewards*: *ond méda gehét*.

Bugge's correction; in place of *ond mé pás mādmas geaf*, and gave me these treasures—a phrase which is quite inappropriate, and which no one has attempted to justify.

2643. *had designed*: *áþohte*.

Or, imagined, conceived the idea of. This force is added by the prefix. Compare *Solomon and Saturn*, ed Kemble, p. 186:—*Saga me, hwylc man áþohte ærest mid sul tó erianne?* Tell me, what man first imagined to plough with a sole?

2646. *of desperate deeds*: *dæda dollicra*.

Grundtvig could not away with this word, thought it was not the true reading, suggested 'dohtigra.' He took for his ground that the word 'dollic' is not capable of being used in a good sense; but this is a matter wherein we have need to be very cautious, because the range of

our extant Epic diction is rather too confined for us to hazard negative assertions about it.

2649 *b*. Here I follow Kemble, who proposed to read *penden hyt* [*hát*] *sý*. Bugge, *Paul und Braune*, xii, approves, and compares *hát þrówian*, 2605; and Riddle 1, 10, *þonne hit wæs rénig weder*.

2655. *quell the foe*: fáne gefyllan.

To fell the foe: fáne=fáh-ne. This word *fáh* has an adjectival inflection, and yet almost always a substantival syntax and sense. So *fára*=fáh-ra, 578.

2657. *those were not the old habits of service*: þæt næron eald gewyrht.

To say as Grein, and after him Heyne, that this means 'such were not his (Beowulf's) merits, that he should suffer alone,' &c., seems to me very frigid, and I cannot help thinking that the poet's thought was like Ettmüller's (followed by Simrock):—

Ich weiss es sicherst,  
Nicht wæren's Altgebräuche, dass er &c.

Not that *eald gewyrht* in itself means 'old customs,'—but taking the word as Grein to mean 'old services' we get Ettmüller's sense; 'I know of a certainty those were not the ways of ancient service that he alone,' &c.

2659. *our sovereign &c.*: úrum &c.

Thorpe corrected *úrum* to *unc*; Grein *unc nú*; but Bugge proposes another emendation, which, if approved, will uphold *úrum*.

He thinks that even with these emendations the sense is unsatisfactory, for how could Wiglaf say that the armour he had received from his chief should be common to his chief with himself? He concludes that two half lines at least are lost between 2660 *a* and 2660 *b*. He proposes for 2660 some such a completion as this:—

byrne and byrdu scrúd [bealdre forgulden]

comparing 2636 and 2868. For 2660 *b*, *bám geméne*, he suggests that Wiglaf may have added 'though one death should befall us both.' He further observes that *byrdu scrúd* is nowhere else found, and that it should perhaps be *bywdu scrúd*, magnificent stately apparel; cf. *bywan*, 2257.

2681. *Nægling*—the name of Beowulf's sword. Cf. *Iliad*, il. 45; ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον.

2692. *with lacerating teeth*: biteran bánum.—The same epithet in a like connection, *wyrma slite bitrum ceafum*, Crist 1252.

2697. *he regarded not that (formidable) head*: ne hédde he þæs heafolan.

Bugge is not content with Grein's interpretation, 'non cavit capiti suo,' followed by Heyne (1863) *nicht schirmt' er sich*.



Bugge observes that *ac* implies antithesis, which is not found between 'he heeded not his own head' and 'his hand got burnt.' He therefore proposes to understand *heafolan* of the head of the dragon, which Beowulf had attacked unsuccessfully (2679), and which now burnt Wiglaf, as he was striking lower (*nioðor* is a comparative). He quotes Saxo vi, p. 272; where Fridlevus fights the dragon that guards a buried treasure in an island. The battle closes thus: Fridlevus, invicta bellue suprema considerans, ima gladio tentat, perfossaque inguinis parte saniem palpitantis elicit.

2699. *smote a little lower down*: *nioðor hwéne slóh*.

This fatal thrust resembles that by which Sir John of the Thumbs slew the Dragon of Denbigh; he planted his sword deep under the dragon's wing.—W. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*, 1879, p. 299.

The adverb *hwéne* is not common; it is rarer even than the kindred word *hwón* a little. Grimm, Gr. iii. 182, identified this with the pronominal *hwon* (*hwan*), but Grein is strong for a very different and indeed a substantival origin. This *hwéne* he regards as the Instrumental case of a noun *hwón*; and umlauted, as in *bóc, béc*. Compare Jamieson, *when*, a number. This *hwón* appears in Barbour as *hwone*, and in Chaucer as *woon*, number. 'And of his contre folk a ful gret woon,' *Legend of Good Women*, 2161, where see Skeat's note. See also Mayhew, v. Woon.

2703. *the slaying knife*: *wæll seaxe*.

Beowulf's sword had flown into splinters (2681), and so now he draws his *seax*, the weapon which is called in *Craftsman* 64, *hupseax*. This *seax* has often been found in Saxon graves on the hip of the skeleton.

2704. *biting and battle-sharp*: *biter and beadu scearp*.

In Sir Beues the sword 'bites bitter;'—he is fighting a lioness:—

þe liounesse so harde he smot,  
With Morgelai, þat biter bot,  
Euene vpon þe regge an hiȝ,  
þat Morgelai in þerþe fliȝ.

E. E. T. S., Extra Series, xlvi; line 2492.

Here we see a verb taking an adverb of the same root, for *bitter* is from *bite*.

2710. *supreme triumphal hour*: *síðast sige hwíla*.

This is Grein's emendation (1857); adopted by Holder (1884):—the MS. has *siðas sigewíle*. But it should be added, that Kemble's lighter change to *síðes* gives an excellent sense: 'That was to the chieftain a victorious moment of his warfare, of his life's work.'

2719. *do contain*: *healde*.

This is the MS. reading. Kemble's correction *héoldon* is adopted by



Heyne. The nominative to *healde* is *eorð reced*:—‘how there stone-bows (arches) firm on piers the old earth-hall do contain.’ This is not an architectural study, but a reconnaissance. Holder has a new reading of his own: *héolde*.

2722. *ladled*: *gelafede*. The curious reader should see Skeat’s Etymological Dictionary, v. Lavish.

2734. *with war-mates*: *gúð winum*.—i. e. with swords, or, more generally, with weapons. See line 1810.

2755. With the following description compare Spenser’s representation of the Cave of Mammon in the *Faery Queene*, II. vii. 28 ff.

2769 a. *with arts of incantation*: *leoðo cræftum*.

Various explained: (1) by craft of members, i. e. skill of hands; and so Dr. Garnett (1882), ‘wrought with hand-craft.’ (2) in membered, i. e. linked device, with arts of mesh-making, netting, tracery. So Holder, Heyne. For this sense we must read *leoðo* unaccented. The strength of this interpretation is drawn from the assumed parallelism of *leoðo syrce*, which however may be well understood as ‘limb-sark’; or, if the fabric is the point of the compound, we may yet consider that although a mail-coat is made in rings or meshes, it is not so clear how this applies to a banner. (3) The other explanation is Thorpe’s ‘lock’d by arts of song,’ followed by Arnold, ‘lock’d by strong spells.’ For this sense we must write *leoðo-*. This has the advantage of accounting for that mystic light, which accompanies the romantic tradition down to its latest stages: e. g. *F. Q.* II. vii. 29. See above, 1517. In *Elene*, 1251, *leoðu craft* is rendered by Zupitza *lied-kunst*, the art of song; and in 522, *leoðo riin*, by *lied-geheimnis*, mystery of song.

2769 b. *there stood forth a gleam*.—‘The shadows will flee away, and the substance stand revealed.’ George Buckle, *Now and Then*, p. 8.

2778. *the old proprietor*: *eald hláforde*.

Rieger’s correction of the MS. reading *eald-hláfordes*. The *eald hláford* is the dragon. This is a repetition of what had been said just before; it is almost like a lyrical refrain:—‘The dragon is dead! The dragon is dead!’

2802. *to erect a cairn*: *hlæw gewyrcean*.

The modern representative of *hlæw* (or rather of *hláw* the northern form) is *low*, but it can hardly be called a living word, being no longer used except in place-names, as Blacklow, Ludlow, Marlow, Taplow, Winslow. Therefore I have borrowed the Gaelic *cairn*, which is now quite familiar as an English word, and is in modern usage the just equivalent of *hlæw*. See New English Dictionary (ed. Dr. Murray), v. Cairn.

2812. *bade him brook them well*: *hét hine brúcan well*.

This phrase carries the two-fold sense, make good use of, and enjoy; so that it is as much as to say, take these insignia with the duties they represent, and my blessing along with them.

2836. *in the world*: *on lande*.



An ancient *cheville*; like *on worulde, on life*, and as we now say, 'not a bit *in the world*.'

2859 *b. just as it does at present*: swá hé nú gén déð.

For this mode of reflection, one of the many touches by which it is repeatedly intimated that the story is an old-world story, compare *Nibelungen*, stanza 1104:—

And they from grief recover'd, as haps to thousands still.

2872. The following passage appears to me very apposite, and I quote it although I have not seen it in context. I borrow it from an essay entitled *Le Campagnonnage dans les Chansons de Geste*, a contribution by J. Flach to *Études Romanes, dédiées à Gaston Paris* (1891), p. 156.

A sa maisnie comença à tenchier :  
'Malvaise gent,' dist Turpin li guerrier,  
'Norris vos ai et tenu forment cier :  
Par saint Remi ! mult l'ai mal emploïé !'

*Chevalerie Ogier*, éd. Barrois, 9320.

2885. *your kin*: éowrum cynne.

The whole troop is regarded as being of one clan, both in this phrase and also in that which follows, *þære mægburge* of that family. This agrees with what Tacitus says in *Germania*, 7: non casus neque fortuita conglobatio turmam aut cuneum facit, sed familiæ et propinquitates.

2886. *destitute of land-right*: lond-rihtes mót, &c.

Grein renders 'each man of the family may now wander deprived of landed possession.' He who lost his land-right was ipso facto degraded to the ranks of the unfree. Kemble says, 'that not only they, but their whole Mæg burh, will thenceforth have forfeited the rights of citizenship. *Saxons in England* (1849), vol. i. p. 235. Compare Tacitus, *Germania*, 14.

2890. A striking parallel in Tacitus, *Germania*, 6 fin.

2899. *in the hearing of all*: ofer ealle.

So in Maldon, 256: *ofer ealle clypode*, he shouted for all to hear.

2900-3027. This has been treated as an interpolation, on the ground that the poet would never have returned again and at such length to Swedish affairs after having noticed them above, 2472 ff. But Professor Pontus Fahlbeck (of Lund) reasonably asks—Why must there never occur in an ancient poem anything that we should now count a mistake in point of form? And why is an interpolator more likely to have done this than the poet himself? On the contrary, he adds, it is extremely unlikely that a man of a later time, such as the ninth or tenth century, should have felt the interest in Northern affairs and should have possessed the particular information to enable him to make such an insertion. *Beovulfsquädet såsom källa för nordisk fornhistoria* in *Antiquarisk*



*Tidskrift för Sverige*, Del. 8; Nr. 2. He insists upon the perfectly historical character of the matters introduced as narrative in regard to Sweden.

2921. *The Merwing*, i. e. the Frankish king.

2957. *behind the earth-wall*: under eorð weall.

Here we distinctly see the living use of those green and silent hill-forts which are so familiar to the explorer of English soil.

2988. *to Hygelac he bare them*: Hygeláce bæc.

One of the repeated examples of a thane bringing his spoils to lay at the feet of his lord. Compare 2148 note; and Tacitus, *Germania*, 14.

2990. *of rewards before his Leeds*: léana [fore] léodum.

So Heyne had it in ed. 4; but in ed. 5 he has *léana* [mid] *léodum* as suggested by Bugge. This would mean 'rewards in the midst of his Leeds,'—no substantial difference of meaning.

In Grein's emendation *léana* [his] *léodum*, which Dr. Garnett has followed, *his léodum* will be in apposition to *him* of the previous line, which *him* would then be plural, covering both Eofor and Wulf; and the sense would be: 'he made a fair promise of rewards to them his Leeds.'

3007. *Now is quickness best*: Nú is ófost betost.

Then Torquil spoke:—The time craves speed,  
We must not linger in our deed.

*The Lord of the Isles*, iii. 10.

3010. *some trifling matter*: ánes hwæt.

Here we have a contrast of the heroic age as against more recent practice. See note on line 49.

Mr. Arthur Evans tells me (Dec. 7, 1886) that in his recent visit to Kertch he found that the Scythian, or rather perhaps Sarmatian (i. e. Iranian) graves had a sort of make-believe money stamped in gold laminæ of extreme thinness; while the graves of the supervening Goths contained solid and massive valuables which they in their more primitive and heroic simplicity laid in the grave with their noble dead. The Sarmatians had come within the influence of Greek culture and Greek scepticism. These thin gold pieces are of about the time of Mithridates. At an earlier date (4th century B. C. and before that) we find the Sarmatians burying solid gold objects of great value with their dead.

3012. *frightfully bargained for*: grimme geceapod.

i. e. purchased at a ruinous price. Whereas Beowulf, on the contrary, seems to say, 2800, that he had done well with the remnant of his life to make it purchase such a treasure for his people.

3016. *maiden sheen*: mægð scýne.

The same phrase is frequent in the Romances; thus in *Ipomydon*, 2126:—



With me went my mayden shene.

Weber, ii. 357.

For the reflection, compare 2 Sam. i. 24.

3018. Compare Tacitus, *Germania*, 8. Now the king is dead, under the shelter of whose formidable name the State had peace and security, powerful neighbours will wreak their grudges, and the noble maidens must be yielded to the conquerors.

3021. *game and glee*: *gamen and gléo dréam*.

This coupling long survived in the metrical romances of the middle ages. Thus in *Lay le Freine*, line 17:—

Thai token an harp in gle and game,  
And maked a lai and yaf it name.

Weber, i. 358.

At length, line 344, for *game* is substituted *pleasaunce*:—

A gret fest than gan they hold  
With gle and pleasaunce manifold.

*Ib.* 369.

But what specially merits attention in this place is the compound *gléo dréam*, the only place where it occurs in all extant poetry. The continuous history of the first part, and the affinity it bears to the sense of the second part, tend to make this compound very interesting. Bishop Percy, in his *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels* said:—‘The word *glee*, which peculiarly denoted their [the Anglo-Saxon minstrels’] art, continues still in our own language to be of all others the most expressive of that popular mirth and jollity, that strong sensation of delight, which is felt by unpolished and simple minds.’ And again he says:—‘As for the word *glee*, it is to this day used in a musical sense, and applied to a peculiar piece of composition.’

For the other part, the word *dréam*, we have this interesting gloss: ‘*Concentus i. adunationes multarum vocum, esenhleoþrung, vel dréam.*’ See note on 89.

3052. *closed about with enchantment*: *galdre bewunden*.

Enchantment supplied a mechanism to romantic poetry, somewhat as the intrigues and contentions of Olympian gods had done in the Greek Epic; but in the *Beowulf* it appears only in this one place.

I am informed by Mrs. Ellis, the author of *Sylvestra*, a lady who has resided many summers at Uffington, that the people of the Berkshire Downs have a traditional awe of the barrows upon the Downs, and that the possession of a bone which has been taken from a barrow fills them with a peculiar and horrible dread.

3053. For the extraordinary efforts, and the atrocious means used to

prevent the rapine of buried sepulchral treasures, see Gibbon's narratives of the funerals of Alaric the Goth and of Attila the Hun.

3056. *He is the salvation of men*: hé is manna gehyld.

This reading of the MS. is quite plain, and Thorpe (1855) rendered it '(He is the well-willer of men),' as indeed Ettmüller, 1840, '(er ist günstig den Menschen!):' but Grein (1857) judged the passage corrupt and suggested *hélsmanna gehyld* = sorcerers' hold; to stand in apposition to *hord*, translating thus 'den Hort öffnen, die Hut der Zauberer,' the hoard to open, the charge of enchanter; and this has been adopted by Dr. Garnett in his translation, Boston, 1882. It is an ingenious and attractive emendation.

Grundtvig (1861) suggested *gehyht*, and this is embodied in Holder's text (1884) = He is the hope, confidence, trust, expectation, of men.

[I have, at the last moment, adopted Grein's emendation, and modified the Translation accordingly.]

3059. *who by unlawful means &c.*: þám þe unrihte.

Those ancient depositors who had laid the spot under a curse; 3070.

3062 b. *By a heroic death*: Wundur[deaðe].

The MS. has *Wundur hwár*. Here Müllenhoff asks whether it is not proof of a poetaster to write: 'Is it any wonder though a warrior should die, seeing he has not much longer to live?' This he asks in triumph, as one who has tracked his interpolator, and confirmed his own theory. But Bugge will not have it that the author (interpolator or no interpolator) could elaborate such poor stuff. He proposes the emendation Wundur[deaðe], a compound which has occurred above in 3037; and observes that *gefære* is hortatory conjunctive, and *þonne . . . þonne* correspond. He seems to mean:—'By a heroic death somewhere (i. e. somehow) should a brave warrior therefore accomplish the end of his life's events, seeing that a man cannot with kinsfolk inhabit his hall very much longer.' And this befits the old heroic instinct which despised a peaceful death; see the death of Sigeweard, the great Northumbrian duke, in Hen. Hunt. 1055.

3069. *according as the mighty captains, &c.*: swá . . . þéodnas mære.

In his ed. 5, Heyne prints this *Swá*, beginning a new sentence. I do not see what is gained thereby.

As late as the fifteenth century we have in the Towneley Plays a survival of such an incantation, where a sheep-stealer by this means would seal the eyelids of the shepherds. I borrow from Mr. Pollard's useful little selection of *English Miracle Plays* (1890), p. 33:—

Bot abowte you a serkylle, as rownde as a moyn,  
To I have done that I wylle, tylle that it be noyn,  
That ye lyg stone styлле, to that I have doyne,  
And I shall say thertylle of good wordes a foyne.



On hight  
Over youre heydes my hand I lyft,  
Outt go youre een, fordo your syght,  
Bot yit I must make better shyft,  
And it be right.

3072. *in heathen fanes*: hergum.

From *herh*, *hearh*, temple; the word (probably) that is extant in the place-name Harrow.

3074-5. *yet never did he &c.*: næs he gold hwæt &c.

A very obscure passage, for which explanations or emendations have been proposed by Bugge, Rieger, Sievers, and latterly a new one by Bugge in *Paul und Braune*, xii. 373, in which he has recourse to the expedient of changing the order of the lines. I have adhered to Bugge's earlier solution in *Tidskrift*, viii. 62, quoted in Heyne's note to this place.

3079—3084. It has been observed by Heinzel (*Anzeiger f. D. Alterthum*, x. 235) that these lines cannot be harmonized with the rest of the narrative, except on the supposition that it applies to the quiet period before the rifling of the hoard.

3084. *fulfil high destiny*: healdan héah gesceap.

Grein's emendation. The MS. has *heoldon*, which is retained by Heyne and Holder. Heyne renders it (beginning a new sentence, 'We have gotten a hard destiny,' wir erhielten ein schweres Schicksal, schweres Schicksal betraf uns. But Holder, 'the destiny appointed from on high,' 'vom Höchsten bestimmtes Geschick.'

3091. *with my hands*: mid mundum.

This is the last occurrence of *mund* hand, and we must not let this interesting word pass unnoticed. We have it five times in the poem, and always in the instrumental case. The sense of hand is surely the oldest sense of the word, which is probably cognate to Latin *manus*. In this sense it is found only in the instrumental case. In the *Menologium* it appears for a measure, the palm, but still in the same case; *prim mundum*. Then it becomes a legal term for *protection*, *guardianship*, and hence the compound *mund-bora*, guardian, patron, which occurs twice in B, 1480, 2779. Another compound, *mund-gripe*, 965.

In the military sense of protection it survives in *mound*, a bank for defence. The form *mound* also occurs in the moral or legal sense of authority, responsibility. In the Romance of *Cœur de Lion* (Weber's *Metrical Romances*), when Richard is in the Holy Land, the report of his brother John's rebellion is thus introduced:—

Thereafty in a lytyl stounde,  
Come messengers off mekyl mound;  
The Bisschop of Chestre was that on,  
That othir the Abbot of Seynt Albou.

Mr. Shadwell tells me that *mound*, *mounding*, is used by the farmers in Oxfordshire and Berkshire to signify a fence of whatever sort, even one of wire, or posts and rails.

Skeat, v. Mound, says that *protection* is the elder sense, and *hand* the secondary sense of this word. The evidence and the reason of the case seem to me to point the other way.

3102 *b. the ruck of jewels*: searo geþræc.

Bugge observes that *searo* does not generally stand for jewellery, and he proposes the emendation *searo-[-gimma] geþræc*. But see note on 924 *a*.

3105. *bullion gold*: brád gold.

This seems a reasonable sense to give to *brád gold*, which may well express the precious metal in bulk, as opposed to that which was wrought into some artistic form. Here the *béagas* with which it is coupled would be gold more or less wrought, and below, 3134, we have *wunden gold*, elsewhere we have gold in plates, *fætt*.

3108 *f. where he shall tarry long in the safe keeping of the Almighty*: þær hé longe sceal &c.

Compare in Weber, iii. 4, the following:—

Sone efterward byfel this case,  
The lady died and graven was,  
And went whare God hyr dight to dwell.

3115 *a. the scowling flame must wash*: weaxan wonna lég.

Heyne's way of putting these words in parenthesis, seems very awkward, though nothing better offers, if *weaxan* is 'grow.' I take it for *wascan*, wash; see *Land Charters*, v. waxan.

3119. *with feather-fittings eager*: feðer gearwum fús.

Compare *Iliad*, xvi. 773:—

λοί τε πτερόεντες ἀπὸ νευρῆφι θορόντες.

3135. *the Etheling*: æðelinge.

The MS. has *æðelinge*, upon which Bugge makes the ingenious remark, that no doubt the transcriber had *æþelinge* before him. This *gc* represents a pronunciation for which in our day Lancashire is distinguished, and especially Liverpool. In Heyne's ed. 5, the editor, Dr. Socin, has corrected *æðeling* to *æðelinge*.

3144. *the wood-smoke mounted up*: wudu réc ástáh.

No idle phrase;—for in the *Ynglinga Saga*, c. 10, it is said by Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century:—'It was their belief that the higher the smoke rose in the air the more glorious would the burnt man be in heaven.'

3145 *a. over the combustive mass*: ofer swioðole.

swicðole MS. We must read swioðole with Thorpe, but not translate with him, 'Swedish pine.'



3145 f. *the roaring blaze &c.*: swógende lég, wópe bewunden (wind-blond gelæg).

Such is the usual reading of the editions. Müllenhoff objected that a great fire raises the wind, and therefore he could not admit *wind-blond gelæg*. To this Bugge adds that the MS. has *let* or *lec*, and he proposes the emendation:—

. . . . . swógende léc  
wópe bewunden wind-blonda lég.

i. e. crackling sported the flame, mingled with the howling of the wind-currents. At the bale-fire of Patroclus the air was still; but Achilles prayed to the winds and poured a libation, and then Iris carried the prayer, and the winds arrived and quickened the flame. *Iliad*, xxiii. 193.

3150–56. I have said above, p. 103, that Professor Bugge seems to have thought of Hecuba in his restoration of this mutilated passage; but his train of thought is not by any means alien to our poem, for it is justified by 3015–27. Grein's effort at restitution was less complete, but it has the merit of taking a more personal turn.

3157. *Then did the people &c.*: Geworhton þa &c.

Mr. T. Wright (*Biog. Lit.* p. 11) has noticed the similarity of expression in an epigram quoted by Plutarch as possibly referring to the legendary barrow of Themistocles on the height over the Piræus. 'Diodorus relates, rather on supposition than knowledge, that as you walk round the harbour of Piræus from Alcimus headland, you have before you a jutting angle, and when you have rounded it and got inside of it, where the sea is lulled in a cave below, you come to a spacious platform crowned by an altar-like pile;—*that* is the tomb of Themistocles.' So Plutarch. And he quotes the following epigram as containing the testimony of Plato the comic poet:—

'Ο σὸς δὲ τύμβος, ἐν καλῷ κεχωσμένος,  
τοῖς ἐμπόροις πρόσρησις ἔσται πανταχοῦ,  
τοὺς τ' ἐκπλέοντας εἰσπλέοντάς τ' ὄψεται,  
χῶπόνταν ἄμιλλα τῶν νεῶν, θεάσεται.

Plutarch, *Themistocles*, ad fin.

And then thy tomb, a heaven-ypointing mound,  
Shall greeting give to merchants wide around;  
Shall see who enter, see who quit the bay,  
And every sailing match in thronèd state survey.

3170. Compare Gibbon in the funeral of Attila:—'His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain, under a silken pavilion; and the chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling round in measured evolutions, chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world.' *Decline and Fall*, c. 35.

3172 a. *they would bewail their loss*: woldon [ceare] cwíðan.

This emendation of Grein's is recommended by the prevalence of the combination *ceare cwíðan*, for which see Grein, v. Cwíðan. The verb we have already had above, 2112, *gioguðe cwíðan*. [In Heyne's ed. 5, the editor, Dr. Socin, has preferred Bugge's emendation, *woldon [gén] cwíðan*, they would revive the lament.]

3178. *from the tenemental body*: of líc haman [lænum] weorðan.

*Læne* was Kemble's word for filling the lacuna; but it gives too poor a sense. Bugge (*Tidskrift*, viii. 65) proposed *lænum*, taking *forð* with *weorðan*, so that *forð weorðan* should mean to depart.

3182-3. In the close of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, there is a eulogy of Lancelot which almost seems like an expansion of these closing lines of the *Beowulf*:—

'And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the quire of Joyous Gard, he alight and put his horse from him, and came into the quire, and there he saw men sing and weep. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother Sir Launcelot dead. And then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him; and when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage he fell down in a swoon. And when he awaked it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. Ah, Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all christian knights; and now I dare say, said Sir Ector, thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand; and thou were the courtiest knight that ever bare shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword; and thou were the goodliest person ever came among press of knights; and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest.'

Shakspeare makes his ideal knight, Henry the Fifth, just before the Battle of Agincourt, speak thus:—

But if it be a sinne to couet Honor,  
I am the most offending Soule aliue.

*Henry V*: Act iv. Sc. 3.

Our latest romantic poet, in his 'Elaine,' makes the Queen say of Arthur:—

You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.



## GLOSSARY OF PROPER NAMES

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**Abel**, whom Cain slew, 108.

**Ælf-here**, a kinsman of Wiglaf's, 2604.

**Æsc-here**, a trusted friend of Hrothgar's, slain by the troll-wife, 1294, 1323, 2122.

**Béanstán**, Breca's father, 524.

**Béowulf**, a patriarchal king of the Danes; son of Scyld: father of Healfdene! 18, 53, 57.

**Béo-wulf**, the hero of the poem; one of the royal house of the Scandinavian Goths (*Géatas*). His father was Ecgtheow, a Wægmunding, 263; his mother was a daughter of Hréðel the Gothic king, 374; he was nurtured at court with Hréðel's sons, 2428 ff. Dull and unpromising in boyhood, 2183 ff.; he grew up to manhood with the strength of thirty men in his fist, 379; he is unequalled at handgrips, 710 ff., 2501 ff.; but too violent for sword-play, 2682. Swims a match with Breca, 506 ff. Goes with fourteen companions to the help of Hrothgar against Grendel, 198 ff. His fight with Grendel, 710 ff.; he is rewarded by Hrothgar, 1020 ff.; his fight with the troll-wife, 1441 ff.; his return home to his king Hygelac, 1963 ff.; was with Hygelac in his last disastrous expedition, and swam home, 2359 f.; declines the throne but acts as the guardian of the young prince Heardred, 2377 ff.; eventually

succeeds him, 2207, 2389; his expedition into Sweden, 2391; his fight with the dragon, 2538 ff.; his death, 2817; sepulture, 3134 ff. His character, 3181-3.

**Breca**, a prince of the Brondings, and son of Béanstán; he has a swimming-match with Beowulf, 506-531.

**Breosinga mene**. See note on 1199.

**Brondingas**, 521. See Breca.

**Cain**, 107, 1261.

**Dæg-hrefn**, a warrior of the Hugas, whom Beowulf vanquished in unarmed conflict, 2501.

**Danes (Dene)**, 242, 271, 465, 767, 2125.

Other names which they bear are *Scyldingas*, *Ingwine*, *Hréðmen*, for which see under those words. They are also called *gár-Dene*, spear-bearing Danes, as in the first line of the poem, and 1856; *hring-Dene*, ring-Danes, either for their mail-coats or their wealth, 116, 1279; *beorht-Dene*, bright Danes, 427, 609. Their wide geographical extension is indicated by a peculiar contrivance, for they are at one time called east-Danes, and at other times west-Danes, north-Danes, south-Danes, 383, 392, 463, 616, 783, 1578.



- Eádgils**, son of Ohthere, and grandson of Ongentheow, the Swedish king, 2392.
- Eánmund**, his elder brother, 2611.
- Earna-næs** (Eagle-bluff), the scene of Beowulf's encounter with the dragon, 3031.
- Ecg-láf**, Unferth's father, 499.
- Ecg-ðéow**, the father of the hero Beowulf, 263, 373, 529, 1999.
- Ecg-wela**, 1710. According to Grein, the founder of the Danish dynasty which went before that of the Scyldings, and which ended in Heremod.
- Elan**, daughter of Healfdene, the Scylding, 62.
- Eofor** (Jofor), a Goth; son of Wonred and brother of Wulf. He slew the Swedish king Ongentheow, and for this service he received from king Hygelac his only daughter, with other rewards, 2486, 2964, 2993, 2997.
- Eómær**, son of the mythic king Offa and his queen Thrytho, 1960. Introduction, p. lxxvii.
- Eormen-ric**, the famous bardic king of the Goths, from whom Háma stole the Necklace of the Brisings, 1201. Compare *Traveller's Song*, 8, 18, 88, 111.
- Eotenas**, the subjects of Finn, king of Friesland, are so called, 1072, 1088, 1141, 1145. This gentile designation must be distinguished from *eoton*, giant, monster, which occurs in 112, 421, 668, 761, 883.
- Finn**, a Frisian king, the hero of a Lay, which is inserted as an episode, 1068-1159. His subjects are called Eotenas; he has to queen a Danish princess called Hildeburh the daughter of Hóc, 1068, 1071, 1076, 1089, 1128.
- Finna-land**, the land of the Fins, or Finland. A distant and poetic goal reached by Beowulf in his juvenile swimming-match of five days long, 580.
- Fitela**, nephew of Sigemund the Wælsing, 875-889. This mythic name enters into local nomenclature, *Land Charters*, p. 357, where a spot is described as *Fitelan sladas crundæl*.
- Fole-walda**, the father of Finn, 1089.
- Franks** (**Franca**), the nation of the Franks, who are here seen in their earliest historical seat, associated with the Frisians and the Hugas. Upon them Hygelac, Beowulf's lord, makes war and is slain, 1210, 2912, 2916.
- Freawaru**, a Danish princess, daughter of Hrothgar and Wealhtheow; she was married to Ingeld, son of Froda, king of the Heathobards, by way of cementing a peace between the nations, 2022, 2064.
- Frisians** (**Frésan, Frísan, Frýsan**), 1070, 1093, 1104, 1207, 2912, 2915.
- Fróda**, king of the Heathobards, and father of Ingeld, 2025.
- Gármund**, father of Offa, bardic king of the Angles, 1962. He is the same as Wærmund in the two Angle genealogies of the Chronicle A, anno 626 and 755.
- Géatas**, the nation of Beowulf, the hero of the poem; most likely to be identified with the Goths who gave name to the province of Gothland in Sweden. But some prefer to identify them with the Jutes of Jutland. They are also called Wederas and Weder-Géatas (Storm-folk, Storm-Goths), 195, 205, 225, 423, 443, 1492, 1538, 1850, 1986, 2551.
- Gepidæ**, in the original *Gifðum*, dative plural of *Gifðas*, 2494. In *Traveller's Song*, 60; *mid*



*Gefðum ic wæs*, I was among the Gepidæ.

**Grendel**, a demon from the morass, who was the scourge of Heorot, and whom Beowulf destroyed, 102, 151, 820, 836, 1266, 1578.

**Gúth-láf** and **Osláf**, Danish warriors, engaged in the revenge upon Finn, 1148.

**Hæreth**, father of Hygd, wife of Hygelac, 1929, 1981.

**Hæthcyn**, the second son of Hrethel, and predecessor of Hygelac on the throne of the Goths. He had shot his elder brother Herebeald 2437 ff. He fell in battle against Ongentheow the Swedish king, 2434, 2474, 2482, 2925 ff.

**Hálga** the Good, younger brother of Hrothgar, 61.

**Háma**, carries off the *Brisinga mene*, 1198.

**Healf-dene**, son of Beowulf the Scylding, and father of Hrothgar, 57; who is repeatedly described as 'the son of Healfdene,' 189, 344, 1009, 1020.

**Heard-réd**, son of Hygelac and Hygd. While yet a minor he succeeded to his father's throne as king of the Goths, having his cousin Beowulf for a guardian and regent. He was killed by one of the sons of Ohthere, fugitive princes from Sweden, 2202, 2376, 2389.

**Heathobards**(**Heatho-beardas**), apparently the same as the Longbards, in their first seat on the lower Elbe. We have mention of their king Froda, who fell in war with the Danes. Among the pledges of peace his son Ingeld married the Danish princess Freawaru, daughter of Hrothgar, but this did not prevent the quarrel from recrudescence, 2033, 2038,

2068. Perhaps the name is a poetic compound with prefix *heaðo-* (warlike) and *Longbeardas* with the first syllable omitted for the exigency of compounding. See note on 924.

**Heatho-láf**, a warrior of the Wylfingas, who was slain by Ecgtheow, the father of Beowulf, 460.

**Heatho-ræmas**, the people on whose shore Breca landed from his great swimming-match with Beowulf, 520.

**Helming**. Wealhtheow, the queen of Hrothgar, was a princess of the house or clan of the Helmingas, 620.

**Heming**. The description 'kinsman of Heming' is applied both to the mythic Offa, 1944; and to his son Eomær, 1961. Heming is otherwise unknown. Müllenhoff, *Untersuchungen* (1889), p. 74.

**Hengest**, a Danish captain in the Lay of Finn, who took the command when Hnæf was slain by the Frisians, 1083, 1091.

**Heoro-gár**, **Hiorogár**, **Heregár**, the eldest son of king Healfdene, and elder brother of Hrothgar. He died early, leaving a son Heoroweard. A special suit of armour he had, which he did not give to his son (though he had no complaint against him), but which Hrothgar gave to Beowulf, and Beowulf presented to Hygelac, 61, 468, 2158 ff.

**Heoro-weard**, son of Heorogar, 2160.

**Heort**, **Hiort**, **Heorot**, **Heorut**, Hrothgar's hall of state, where Beowulf watched for Grendel, and vanquished the ogre, 79, 166, 403, 476, 767, 2098.

**Here-beald**, Hrethel's eldest son, who was killed by an arrow from the hand of his brother Hæthcyn, 2434, 2463.

**Here-mód**, a Danish king of



- times antecedent (as Grein supposes) to the dynasty of the Scyldings. He was the greatest of warriors in his day, but a cruel tyrant, and he was driven out by his Leeds, 901 ff., 1709.
- Here-ric**; in 2206 Heardred is called the nephew of Hereric. We have no other mention of Hereric.
- Het-ware**, the Chattuarii, one of the nations allied against Hygelac in his Frisian expedition, 2363 ff., 2916.
- Hildeburh**, daughter of Hóc, and consort of Finn the Frisian king, 1071.
- Hnæf**, a captain of the Half-Danes and a Scylding, 1069, 1114. He is mentioned in Trav. 29 and in Finnsb. 40. The name appears in local nomenclature, K. 430, *Land Charters*, p. 373, *Hnæfleah*; K. 595, *to Hnæfes scylfe*.
- Hóc**, the father of Hildeburh, 1076; perhaps also of Hnæf. See *Traveller*, 29.
- Hond-scío**, one of the comrades of Beowulf; he fell a victim in the night-watch for Grendel, 2076.
- Hreosna-beorh**, a mountainous district on the frontier between Swedes and Goths, 2478.
- Hréthel**, a king of the Goths, and father of Hygelac; he was Beowulf's maternal grandfather, who nurtured him as his own son. His second son Hæthcyn shot his elder brother Hereward, and this brought Hrethel to the grave with a broken heart, 374, 1486, 2430, 2470.
- Hréthla**, the same as Hrethel; a weak form of the name, 454.
- Hréth-men**, a name for the Danes, 444.
- Hréth-ric**, one of the sons of Hrothgar, 1189, 1836.
- Hrónesness** (*Hrónes-næs*), a conspicuous promontory on the sea coast, on which was made the bale-fire and the sepulchre of Beowulf, 2805, 3137.
- Hróth-gár**, the most conspicuous figure of a king in the poem. He is the Danish king who is in distress through the ravages of Grendel, and he it is whom Beowulf sets out to deliver. He is of the Scylding dynasty, son of Healsdene, brother of Heorogar and Halga, and husband of Wealhtheow. He is the builder of the hall of Heorot, which is the foreground of the action in the First Part and a receding scene in the Second Part. He is the ideal *old* king, a man of many and varied experiences, 61, 79, 152, &c.
- Descriptive by-names of his are, Friend of the Scyldings, 148, 268, 1182; son of Healsdene, 189; lord of the Scyldings, 291; supreme of Scyldings, 371, 456.
- Hróth-mund**, a son of Hrothgar, 1189.
- Hróth-ulf**, apparently son of Halga and nephew of Hrothgar, 1016, 1180. He was kindly nurtured by Hrothgar and Wealhtheow, but the expectations they formed of his attachment and fidelity seem to have been disappointed by the event, 1165.
- Hrunting**, the name of Unferth's sword, which he lent to Beowulf for his second adventure, 1459, 1660, 1809.
- Húgas**, one of the allied nations who opposed Hygelac's raid in Friesland. Their champion Dæghrefn was slain by Beowulf in single combat, 2503.
- Hún**, one of the subject princes of king Finn, 1143. According to *Traveller* 33, he was the ruler of the Hetware, i. e. the Chattuarian Franks.
- Hygd**, the consort of Hygelac king of the Goths; as a young



queen she is a pattern of conduct. Her father's name was Hæreth. Her son was Heardred, to whom Beowulf acted the part of a guardian, 1927, 1929, 2172, 2369, 2376.

**Hyge-lác**, king of the Goths; and uncle of Beowulf, who was sister's son to Hygelac. Thus Hrethel the father of Hygelac was Beowulf's grandfather. Hygelac is called grandson of Swerting. Hygelac is the youngest of the three sons of Hrethel, and not too much Beowulf's senior for Beowulf to regard himself as having been brought up with him, and with his brethren (2432).

After the brief reign of Hæthcyn he ascended his father's throne, and (if we accept a late and incidental notice) he soon after gave his only daughter to Eofor in marriage as a reward for avenging the death of Hæthcyn upon the Swedish king Ongentheow (2979 ff.). This however appears not in the action of the narrative, but in the later reminiscences of the nameless envoy who reviews the situation after Beowulf's death, and it fits but awkwardly into the scheme of Hygelac's life. That he should at this stage of his career be found to have a marriageable daughter is very embarrassing to the harmonist.

For, at the moment of Beowulf's return from Denmark, Hygelac is expressly called 'young' (1831), and he has a young queen whose name is Hygd, the daughter of Hæreth; and though the text says that she had been not long in the royal castle, yet there is scarcely room to make Hygd his second wife, as Heyne lightly does. Their son was Heardred, to whom Beowulf acted as guardian

when he became king after Hygelac's fall in his invasion of the Frisian coast, 194, 343, 408, 1203 ff., 2170, 2356, 2915. Hygelac is called the banesman of Ongentheow, as being head of the expedition in which he fell, though he was actually slain by the hand of Eofor, 1969.

**Ingeld**, prince of the Heathobards, who was united in marriage with Freawaru the daughter of Hrothgar as a seal of the newly-made peace between his people and the Danes. The blood-feud was stayed thereby only for a time, 2025, 2033, 2065.

**Ingwines (Ing-wine)**, a name by which the Danes are called; meaning possibly 'Friends of Ing:' the name Ing being found in Danish royal pedigrees, 1043, 1319.

**Jofor**, the same as Eofor, which see.

**Láfling**, the name of a famous sword, with which Hengest was presented by Hún, 1144.

**Merwing (Merewio-ing)**, the Merovingian, i.e. the Frankish king, 2922.

**Nægling**, the name of Beowulf's sword in his fight with the dragon, 2681.

**Offa**, the bardic king of the Angles (Gleeman 35); his father is called Garmund, his wife is Thrytho, and their son is Eomær, 1932-1962.

**Oht-here**, son of the Swedish king Ongentheow; he is father of Eanmund and Eadgils, 2381, 2394, 2612, 2929, 2933.



**Onela**, the brother of Ohthere, 2617, 2933.

**Ongen-théow**, king of Sweden, of the Scylfing dynasty. He is father of Onela and Ohthere, and their mother is surmised to be Elan, daughter of Healfdene (see 62 note). When Hæthcyn invaded Sweden, he captured the mother of Onela and Ohthere, but she was rescued by Ongentheow, who slew Hæthcyn, and was about to massacre the whole Gothic force, when Hygelac came up and delivered them and defeated Ongentheow. The Swedish king was slain by the hand of Eofor, who consequently had Hygelac's daughter to wife, 2485, 2925, 2951, 2986.

**Os-láf**, see **Gúthláf**.

**Ravenswood**, also called **Ravensholt**, where Ongentheow the Swedish king slew Hæthcyn the king of the Goths, 2926, 2936.

**Scede-lands**, 19. The same as Scedenig.

**Sceden-ig**, dative Scedenigge, 1686. This is the Icel. *Skáni* or *Skáney* (for which see Vigf.), Latin *Scania*, *Scandia*, *Scandinavia*. In Fredegar it is *Schatanavia*. Perhaps these Latin terminations may have some relation to the idea of 'island,' and they may have expressed the old idea that the northern region was an island or a group of islands. From the southernmost part of the peninsula to which the name first applied, which is now in Danish *Skaane*, and in German *Schonen*, it has been generalized to cover the whole northern region. Its position at the

southernmost extremity of the peninsula made it first known to the Romans, and consequently the name was adopted by Latin writers for the whole of the north.

**Scyld**, the eponymous author of the dynasty of the Scyldings, 4 note, 27.

**Scyldings (Scyldingas)**, the dynastic name of the Danish royal family, 53, 2106. This name is extended to the Danish folk, 274, 464, 598, 1601, 2004.

**Scylfings (Scylfingas)**, the dynastic name of the royal house of Sweden, 63, 2927. It is remarkable that Wiglaf, the nearest living relative of Beowulf, is a Leod of the Scylfings, 2604.

**Sige-mund**, the old mythic dragon-slayer; he is son of Wæls, and uncle of Fitela, 875-902.

**Sweden (Swéo-ðéod, Swío-ríce, Swéon)**, 2384, 2474, 2495, 2924, 2947, 3001.

**Swerting**, the grandfather or the uncle of Hygelac, uncertain which, 1204.

**Thrytho**, the queen of the mythic Offa; a ferocious woman, contrasted with the gentle Hygd. 1932 note.

**Unferth**, the orator or lore-man who sate at the feet of king Hrothgar, and was envious at the distinctions which other men won. He is the son of Ecgláf. He giped at Beowulf, but he afterwards lent him a sword of renown, 500, 1167, 1456, 1808.

**Wægmundings (Wæg-mundingas)**, a family name embracing Beowulf and Wiglaf in one kindred, 2608, 2813.

**Wæls**, the father of Sigemund, 878, 898.

**Wealh-théow**, the dignified matron and queenly hostess;



consort of Hrothgar, 614, 630, 665, 1163, 1216.

**Wederas**, a second name for the nation of the Goths, 342, 423, 498.

**Wedermark** (**Weder-mearc**), 299. The name of Beowulf's country, as his people are called not only Goths (*Geatas*) but also *Wederas*. But there is no territorial name corresponding to the modern 'Gothland.' Thorpe suggests a connection of name with the great Lake Wetter.

**Weland**, the smith of ancient legend, in Old German *Welant*, in Icelandic *Völundr*. Beowulf prizes his mail-coat as a work of Weland's, 455.

**Wendlas**. Wulfgar, the officer who first challenged Beowulf on his arrival at Heorot, is described as a prince of the *Wendlas*. Bugge formerly thought this name designated the people of 'Vendill,' the northmost district of Jutland; but now (1887, *Paul und Braune*, xii. 7) he prefers to think it stands for

the Vandals, 349. Thorpe says *Wends* or Vandals.

**Weoh-stán**, **Wih-stán**, the father of *Wigláf*, 2603, 2753, 2862, 2908.

**Wig-láf**, the one faithful and devoted supporter of Beowulf in the supreme danger of his fight with the dragon. He was Beowulf's next kinsman, and to him the dying hero gave over the charge and the insignia of royalty, 2603, 2661, 2809, 2908.

**Won-réd**, the father of Wulf and Eofor, 2971.

**Wulf**, son of Wonréd and brother of Eofor. Wulf fought the Swedish king Ongentheow, and was beaten. His brother avenged him, 2984, 2992.

**Wulf-gár**, a prince of the *Wendlas*, who is an officer in Hrothgar's court, 348.

**Wylfings** (**Wylfingas**), the family stock of Heatholáf, who was slain by Ecgtheow, 461.

**Yrmen-láf**, Æschere's younger brother, 1324.